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CONTENTS

The Hugh Dixon Homestead: What to Make of Tradition?
Rachel B. Osborn 3

The Constant Aesthetic of Bobby McMillon: “I’ve Just
Always Tried to Find Any Old Song or Story That I Could”
Ken Kenkel 18

I.O.O.F. Murals, *Stuart C. Schwartz* 30

“Some People Never Learn” (AT 777), *Mac Barrick* 33

Review, *Egle V. Zygas* 38

Illustrations, *Norma Farthing Murphy*

Cover: The Hugh Dixon Homestead, northern and eastern
elevations. March 1980, Snow Camp, N.C. Photograph by
Rachel Osborn.

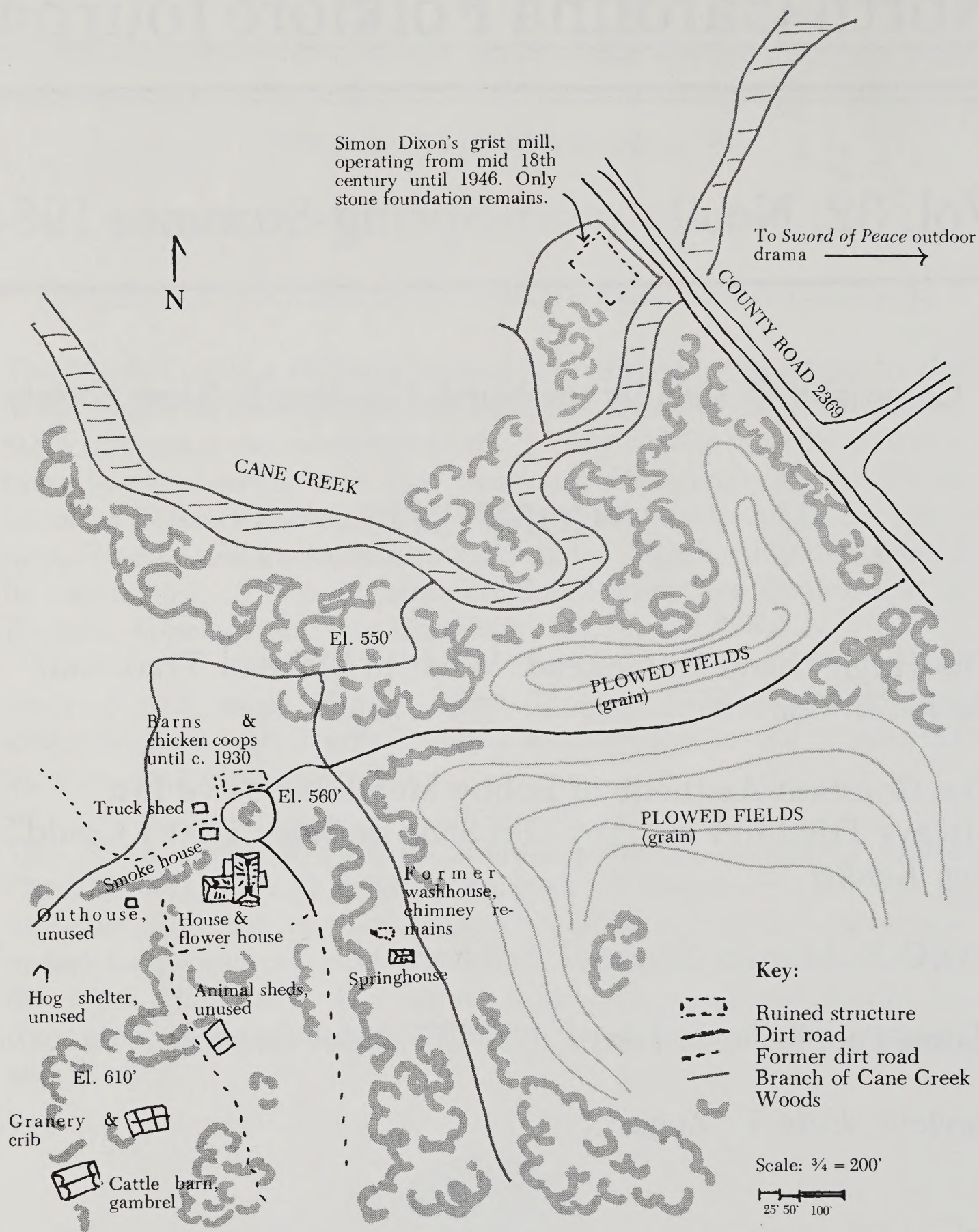


Fig. 1. The Hugh Dixon Homestead in Snow Camp, N.C. Adapted from a drawing by Rachel Osborn based on county aerial photographs (1980).



1984 Cratis D. Williams Prize

The Hugh Dixon Homestead: What to Make of Tradition?

by Rachel B. Osborn

In 1866 a small, unpretentious farmhouse was built in the Quaker community of Snow Camp, North Carolina. Given the context of rural life in the Piedmont, it is not surprising that the moderately prosperous Hugh Dixon should choose to build a new structure for his growing family on land that had belonged to his forebears for over a generation. Nor, at first glance, does the house exhibit any startling deviations from the vernacular housing traditions of the area. Sitting atop a shaded knoll, the white clapboard house is bordered on the north by the meandering Cane Creek and flanked by weathered wooden outbuildings. From the gently sagging front porch, one looks across a plowed field to the quiet country road running parallel to the farmhouse. Inside as well as outside the dwelling, we find evidence of the traditional rural lifeways which have continued here for 116 years.

Yet a closer look at the house and community of which it is part reveals that innovation as well as tradition is a significant cultural value here. From its founding in 1752 until the late nineteenth century,

Rachel Osborn, a graduate student in the Curriculum in Folklore at the University of North Carolina, wrote her study of the Hugh Dixon house as part of a course with Terry Zug. Ms. Osborn lives in Pittsboro, North Carolina.

Snow Camp was a manufacturing center as well as an agricultural hamlet of small subsistence farms. Simon Dixon's grist mill, the first built on Cane Creek, operated from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. In 1830 Joseph Dixon—Simon Dixon's grandson, and Hugh Dixon's father—established one of the first foundries for casting iron in North Carolina. These and other manufacturing concerns, including textile factories, rose and fell during the nineteenth century. In 1880 the decision not to build a new railroad through Snow Camp spelled the eventual demise of all of them.

Thus, in 1866 Snow Camp was not the quiet backwater it seems today. It was a place where rural folkways were being challenged by manufacturing innovations; it was the time when the transition from folk culture to popular culture was taking place here and throughout the United States. Hugh Dixon's house, unpretentious as it is, faithfully reflects the dynamic interplay between continuity and change that was occurring in his community.

Like any other human-made artifact, the house is, in James Deetz's words, "the *direct* expression of changing values, images, perceptions and ways of life as well as of certain constancies. . . ." ¹ It is the concrete realization of an abstract idea, the product of the builder/owner's choice among the variables of ideology, technology, function, and style which his culture offers him. In examining the house, we are investigating the psyche of the builder/owner, the local traditions of his community, and the widespread attributes of the culture area in which the artifact is found. To study adequately the material object and the human beings who produced it, we must consider not only the structure of the dwelling, but the needs of the maker and the values of the culture. As Henry Glassie points out:

It will be necessary to know not only what an object is and what its history and distribution are, but also what its role in the culture of the producer and user is, and what mental intricacies surround, support and are reflected in its existence. ²

The focus of this essay is the form, construction, and use of the Hugh Dixon house through time. We will describe the house as conceived and as realized by the builder, and as experienced and altered by successive occupants and owners. We will view the homestead from within the matrix of folk traditions in the area, yet consider the precise folk nature of the house to be somewhat problematic. When traditional and innovative techniques intertwine, as they do in this house, how are we to classify and explain the resultant artifact? What meanings are to be found in the structure and function of such a house?

At the outset of this process, we need to understand the "mind of the builder" and the kinds of influences Hugh Dixon experienced while he was growing up in the Snow Camp community. From contemporary as well as more recent Quaker documents, we fortunately can get a fairly

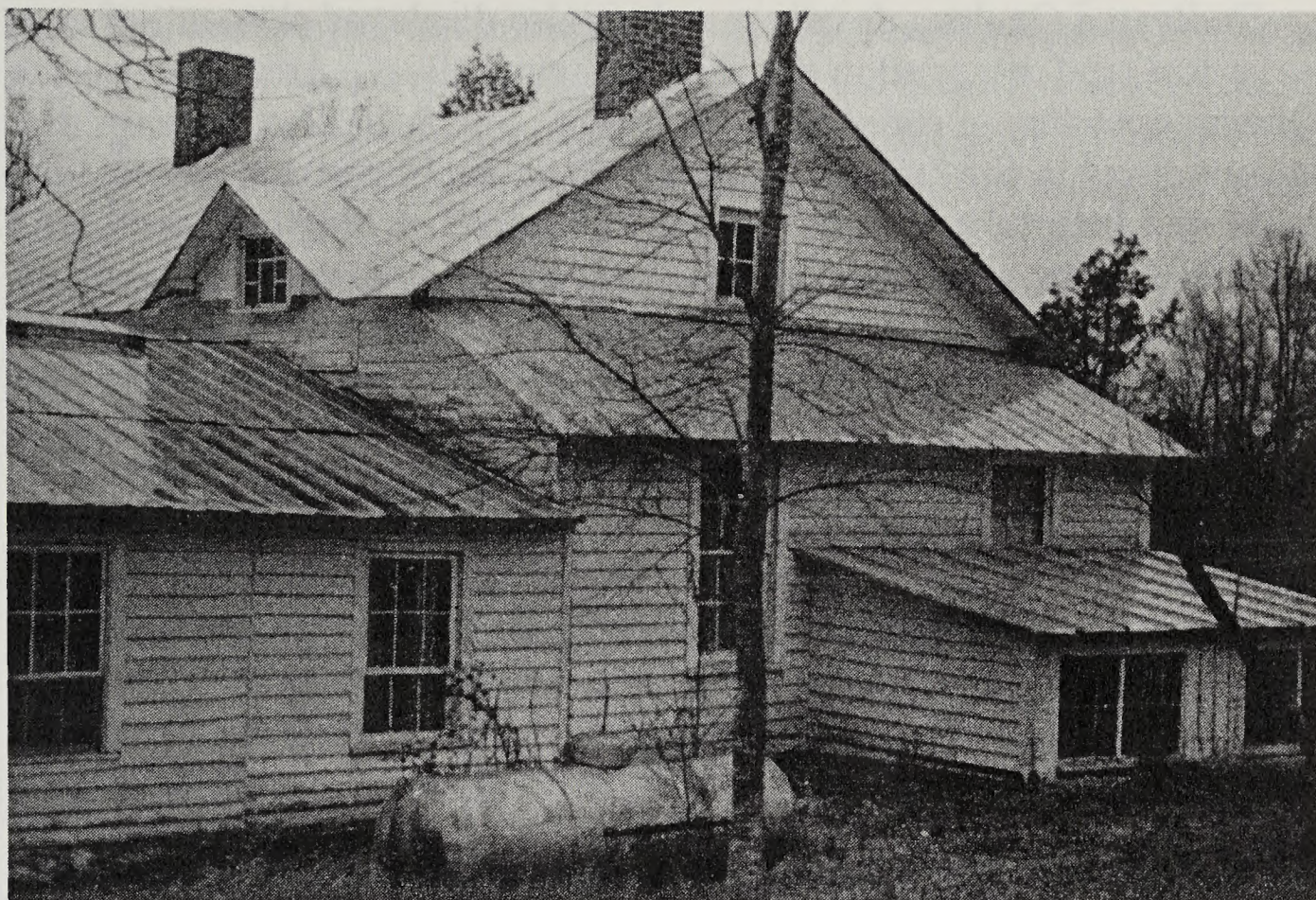


Fig. 2. Southern elevation and flower house of the Hugh Dixon homestead (March 1980).

clear picture of Hugh Dixon and the religious traditions surrounding him. From Carl Lounsbury's *Alamance County Historic Sites Survey*, we gain an insight into the processes of time as reflected in Snow Camp's built environment.

In 1825 Hugh Woody Dixon was the first child born to Joseph and Mary Woody Dixon, who lived in a farmhouse close to the Cane Creek Friends Meeting. This area, then the northern border of Chatham County, became part of Alamance County later that century. Like other farmers in this section of the county, the Dixons would have engaged primarily in the cultivation of wheat and other grains. The soil was not suited for tobacco, which in any event would have required more personnel than the non-slaveholding Friends could have supplied. Cotton and other crops were grown principally for family use. Thus "at no time did a plantation economy emerge as the predominant feature of the region's culture. It was always a landscape filled with small farmsteads cultivated by individual families."³

While participating in the subsistence-farm traditions of the region, the Dixons also displayed mechanical genius and a flair for business enterprise. In 1830, Joseph Dixon started his Snow Camp Foundry, which operated until 1875. The 1840 Census shows one member of the household engaged in the "learned professions and engineers," and one involved in "manufacture and trades"—this latter most likely Hugh Dixon, age fifteen.⁴

Dedicated Quakers, family members also displayed elements of conservatism and innovation in their religious lives. Adhering to the Quaker doctrines of simplicity, pacificism, and Spirit-led worship, the Dixons clung to the “moderation and plainness in gesture, speech, apparel and furniture of house” strictly required of Meeting members.⁵ Yet the Dixons also valued higher education at a time when many Friends found it mere “creaturely activity.” Hugh Dixon was sent to the New Garden [Friends] Boarding School in Greensboro in 1838 and spent the winters of 1842-44 teaching there. In 1841 a miraculous recovery from a grave illness led him to his lifelong involvement in Christian causes and Quaker organizations. In 1855, however, he deliberately violated the Quaker discipline by marrying a non-Friend, Flora Adaline Murchison. Far from apologizing for his misdeed, he chose to boldly criticize the Discipline instead. “Hugh W. Dixon,” notes one biographer, “combined the family traditions of zealous piety, a broad interest in community affairs, and moderate prosperity, with a streak of stubborn independence. . . .”⁶

From 1844 until 1857, Hugh Dixon lived in Snow Camp and worked as a partner in the Snow Camp Foundry, except for the years 1853-55 when he was involved in building the Graham and Gulf Plank Road. As the vice-president of the company which built the road, he did the survey work and operated the sawmill which produced the planks for the toll road. By 1850 Hugh Dixon had a hundred-acre farm valued at \$500.⁷ Its moderate size and output, compared to other farms in the area, indicate that farming was not his prime concern at this juncture.

The new industrial enterprises in which Hugh Dixon was closely involved helped to alter the local building traditions which had been developing during the previous hundred years. Carl Lounsbury states that from Alamance County’s initial period of settlement until the end of the Civil War, log construction was the most prevalent building form. What is found in the county is

the confluence and interplay of these two regional building traditions—the Pennsylvania penchant for log and stone compared to the Tidewater reliance upon hewn frame construction; house types with centrally located chimneys compared to house types with gable-end chimneys; principal rafter roofs compared to common rafter roofs. . . . From origins in cultural diversity, there arose in the eighteenth century a homegrown vernacular way of building.⁸

While the hall parlor form was the most popular type of antebellum house in Alamance County, a minor type was the three-room plan, found only in the southern section and most notably Snow Camp. Whether or not William Penn exhorted his fellow Quakers to use this so-called “Quaker plan,” it seems clear that the Pennsylvania Quakers who founded Snow Camp brought this house with them. Certainly,

too, the unadorned bicameral style of the Meetinghouses in Pennsylvania was a deciding factor in the plan of the Cane Creek Meeting as it progressed beyond the log stage. Very likely this plan influenced the dwelling styles and structures of Snow Camp Friends, as well. Lounsbury notes:

A major change in the traditional house types occurred in the county in the last two decades before the Civil War, with the appearance of the central passageway. . . . By the 1850's most of the larger new farmhouses incorporated this new development in their design.⁹

All these architectural elements were destined to have their effects upon the post-Civil War Hugh Dixon house, even as its entrepreneurial builder moved beyond his formative folk traditions. We might also speculate that the vernacular architecture that Dixon saw during his stay in Guilford County also influenced his building concepts, but no concrete evidence to support this possibility has been found.¹⁰

In 1858 Hugh and Adaline Dixon moved from Snow Camp ten miles down the Plank Road to Ore Hill in Chatham County, just east of what is now Mt. Vernon Springs. It is likely that his work on the Plank Road had brought Hugh Dixon into contact with an area of greater economic opportunity than Snow Camp. At any rate,

by industry and economy he in a few years surrounded himself with a comfortable living, bought land, about seven hundred acres, and two mill sites, erected two grist mills and a steam saw mill, and was interested in a small way in the Chatham Ore Hill Company. . . .¹¹

The records do not state whether or not he built himself a house at this site, but it seems reasonable to suppose so.

From Hugh Dixon's entries in his 1858 saw mill ledger, we can begin to assess the impact that this kind of early manufacturing had on the building traditions in the area. Items such as logs for sills and posts, shingles, rafters, joists, ceiling and flooring, screws, six-penny nails, locks, hand-made bricks and doors could be procured at Dixon's mill.¹² In Chatham and Alamance counties, as elsewhere in the country, manufactured goods began to nudge aside folk methods of production. The mid-nineteenth century also saw the advent of the steam-powered saw [Hugh Dixon owned one] and the increased popularity of balloon framing. At this point, building methods and materials began to shift away from vernacular traditions toward something more akin to popular styles. Hugh Dixon was intimately involved in this transition process.

Dixon continued his milling and dairy farming as a resident in the Ore Hill area until 1866. He along with other Quaker men avoided combat in the Civil War by paying a \$500 fine levied against pacifists. Despite his abolitionist, Whiggish views and the economic decline of the area during the war, Dixon appears to have prospered during this

period. In the depressed aftermath of the war, Dixon was given an opportunity he appeared to value more than the pursuit of economic advantage in Ore Hill. In 1866 the philanthropic Baltimore Association of Friends offered to assist the Cane Creek Meeting in starting a Quaker school in Snow Camp. Hugh Dixon promptly moved back to his home community to help set up the school and to give his children the precious experience of a Quaker education.

Dixon's choice of the hilly, wooded terrain behind the Simon Dixon grist mill for his new homesite was made in accord with a number of strong rural traditions. Moving onto a section of land originally acquired by one's forebears was—and is—common practice in the Cane Creek Valley. Amos Rapoport points out that “in this choice, access to food or water, exposure to wind, defensive potential, the sparing of land for agriculture, and transportation all play a role.”¹³ The knoll on which Dixon built his house was well watered by a spring; the thicket on the hill behind the house protected it from the summer heat and winter winds. The homestead's due east orientation afforded an excellent view of its cultivated fields and a close watch upon the road running before them. Economy of site is evident in both the agricultural locus and the awareness of human traffic beyond the farm. Like other post-Civil War rural builders, Hugh Dixon incorporated older and recent folk practices in constructing his environment.

Dixon may have cultivated this site as his farm in 1850 before he moved to Ore Hill. The layout of the farm and the presence of the stone springhouse suggest occupancy prior to 1866.¹⁴ Internal evidence indicates that the original structure, probably log constructed, was all but invisibly incorporated into the ell of the current house. Such an adaptation would conform to the general Southern pattern of transforming first structures into summer kitchens and then into kitchen/dining ells for new houses. The rectangular dimensions of this building can be traced along existing walls of the ell as they align with two dysfunctional framing members: a small exposed section of hewn beam in the kitchen and a post in a bedroom off the dining room. The unity of this area is suggested by the uniform ceiling height, wooden plank paneling, and common square-cut nails. North of this original floor line, the ceiling is lower, the floor sags, and beaded paneling covers both walls and ceiling. A double stone fireplace stood in the center of this structure. When the present owner, Sarah Kimball, and her family moved to the Dixon house in 1931, they

had a fireplace there until we built the flue. I can't remember what year we built that. But you talk about a mess! The fireplace, both of them, was big, of course, and they [were] put together with clay. We tore it down in the summertime, and you'd go all through the house and write your name on everything there was because all that dust. We rolled the rocks out and made us a back porch.¹⁵



Fig. 3. Outbuildings southwest of Dixon house. From nearest to farthest: sheds, crib and granery, cattle barn.



Fig. 4. Sarah Kimball, present owner of Hugh Dixon house.

The house that Hugh Dixon built in front of this structure in 1866 was a reinterpretation of that area's folk housing traditions, suited to his needs and purposes. Carl Lounsbury believes the plan of this house is unique to Snow Camp and probably Alamance County. In part an idiosyncratic structure, the Dixon house nevertheless shares enough features with vernacular buildings in the area to demonstrate both the fixity and fluidity of folk traditions.

Initially Dixon's floor plan appears to be a variant of the one-story Georgian plan. Four rooms built around two internal double fireplaces are symmetrically arranged along a central passageway. Chronologically as well as structurally, this form makes sense; 1866 was a time when the Georgian high style was strongly influencing vernacular buildings. Yet a good look will show that the room placements, fireplaces, and wall piercings are not symmetrical. The structure is also one and a half stories high. Perhaps because of this, there is a gable roof instead of the hipped roof most commonly found in one-story Georgian plan houses. While the house has the moderate-sized porch typical of that plan, its ell appendage is generally found in quarter Georgian houses.

Clearly the Quaker plan favored in Snow Camp and Guilford County and other single-pile central hallway houses in the area powerfully affected the shape of Dixon's house. There were numerous close examples by which he could have been influenced.¹⁶ We see aspects reminiscent of the Quaker plan in the stone foundations of the house, its [11½' square] front hallway, and the boxed stairway tucked away from view in the rear hallway. Boxed stairways, which go back to medieval times, are, of course, found in cabins and hall parlor houses as well. Lounsbury notes that in Alamance "only a handful of houses featured [the] double pile plan. At first the plan was limited to one story houses. . . . [There are] only two two-story double pile houses in the county. . . ." ¹⁷ So Dixon's inspiration for his one and a half story, double pile design must have come from outside his home area.

In attempting to classify the curious amalgam of structural styles that is the Hugh Dixon house, we can only conclude that it is an unusual conflation of the Quaker plan and the Georgian central hallway plan, complete with unique structural details. This fusion of rural traditions with more urbane innovations resulted from the aspirations and intentions of the builder in constructing a dwelling suited to his particular needs. It was a house meant to reflect at once the well-being of the successful dairy farmer, the humble simplicity of the plain Friend, and the forward-looking attitude of the technological innovator.

The home had to provide space for a family of five children, along with domestic help and hired help, and the Quaker boarders who

taught at the Sylvan School just up the road. The house also had to supply office space for Hugh Dixon to carry out the concerns of his grist mill and other business enterprises. In addition, since there was then no granary on the farm, storage space for grain had to be found in the attic. Hugh Dixon's house design both bespeaks and fulfills these various needs.

In function as well as structure, this dwelling stands on the threshold between folk and popular culture. As characteristic of older folk houses, it provides both for intimacy and the flexible use of interior space. Yet it favors the symmetry of plan and the specialization of function which typified the popular styles of a later period. Its growth through time was first organic, then frontally symmetric with prosperity, and finally organic again. It is as though the economic decline of the latter part of the nineteenth century in Snow Camp occasioned a reversion to earlier folk custom in this house form.

The front of the 1866 house constituted the formal and public section. The first two rooms served, respectively, as parlor and living room; the two rooms behind them were bedrooms for family and guests. Hugh Dixon's office space was provided by the large front hallway, in which his secretary and bookcase still stand and where a number of his books and ledgers can still be seen. In this section of the house, the needs of traders, business associates, guests, and older family members were attended to.

The small rear hallway contained the stairs leading to the attic and opened onto the back section of the dwelling—the ell and the yard. It led to the hearth and to the outdoors: towards privacy, informality, and the agricultural side of the Dixons' life. Grain could be brought virtually directly from the fields into the attic and stored in its unpaneled southern section. The more finished northern section of the attic was partitioned into two paneled rooms where the hired help and perhaps later boarders likely slept. The ell appendage reserved the function of "hearth": the preparation and consumption of food in a closely personal and relaxed setting.

As one moved from the front of the house to the back, one traveled from public toward private space, from formality towards informality, from business and entertainment functions towards familial and agricultural pursuits. Henry Glassie might claim that this division of function, along with the dwelling's tripartite and bilaterally symmetrical structure, evinces a desire for control over the environment and human events. But the plan is not so much contrived as sensible. It provides well for the flow of weather outside and the movement of people inside the house. The balanced placement of doors, windows, and fireplaces, for example, does give the house an orderly aspect. More importantly, this arrangement efficiently regulates the temperature in-

side the dwelling; aligned wall piercings cool better, while internal double fireplaces heat better. Here the Hugh Dixon house is a product of the symbiotic folk relationship with nature, even as it makes an innovative cultural statement in form.

The competence of the builder, as he waded in the "template pool" and drew out the design that met his needs, was certainly adequate to the purpose. Yet the performance of the house, its concrete realization into wood, brick, and stone, is a bit less accomplished in its achievement. In its materials and manner of construction, the Dixon house exhibits a curious range of attributes. Gaps show in the sheathing over the sturdy frame construction; a somewhat unaesthetic plainness is touched up with various Greek Revival, Gothic, and Italianate details; and the trimly purposeful lines of the 1866 house are marred by uncertain additions, such as cellar stairs that lead nowhere. Generally the house is somewhat crudely constructed. Perhaps the builder's apparent haste to leave Ore Hill and construct his new house in Snow Camp in less than a year may have had something to do with this. Or perhaps, for the innovator Hugh Dixon, the conception of an idea was more important than its precise rendering into form.

The essential structure of the house, however, is sound. The 2' thick fieldstone base—4' high in the northern section—forms the foundation of the 37' x 25' house. At the ground level, hand-hewn sills and summer beams support the balloon frame structure and the circular-sawed floor joists and floor boards of the first floor. In the attic, the main studs are pegged into both the sills and the secondary plate. The ridge board, rafters, and collar beams are also circular-sawed, and the rafters are pegged into the collar beams. Throughout the 1866 section of the house, square-cut eight penny nails are the most common, but round nails are also found. The frame is sheathed internally by 9" wide, horizontal matched pine boarding; the flooring is 9-11" wide unfinished oak boarding. Outside, 6" clapboards are placed against corner boards. It is possible that the present tin roof replaced a shingled roof.

The two fireplaces typify the combination of popular, folk, and crude elements which characterize the finishing details of the house. Formed of the fieldstone bases and brick chimneys common to the vernacular tradition here, the fireplaces were evidently meant to conform to Georgianized ideas of formal balance. In this attempt they do not completely succeed. The northern fireplace, which appears to have been built first, rises from a massive 4' x 6' plastered stone base in the cellar and emerges from the roof right on the ridge line. By contrast, the southern fireplace appears to have been an afterthought. It is supported simply by a few stones laid over packed earth in the undug portion of the cellar. Standing shorter than its counterpart, the fireplace is



Fig. 5. Close up of joist pegged into hand-hewn beam in attic.

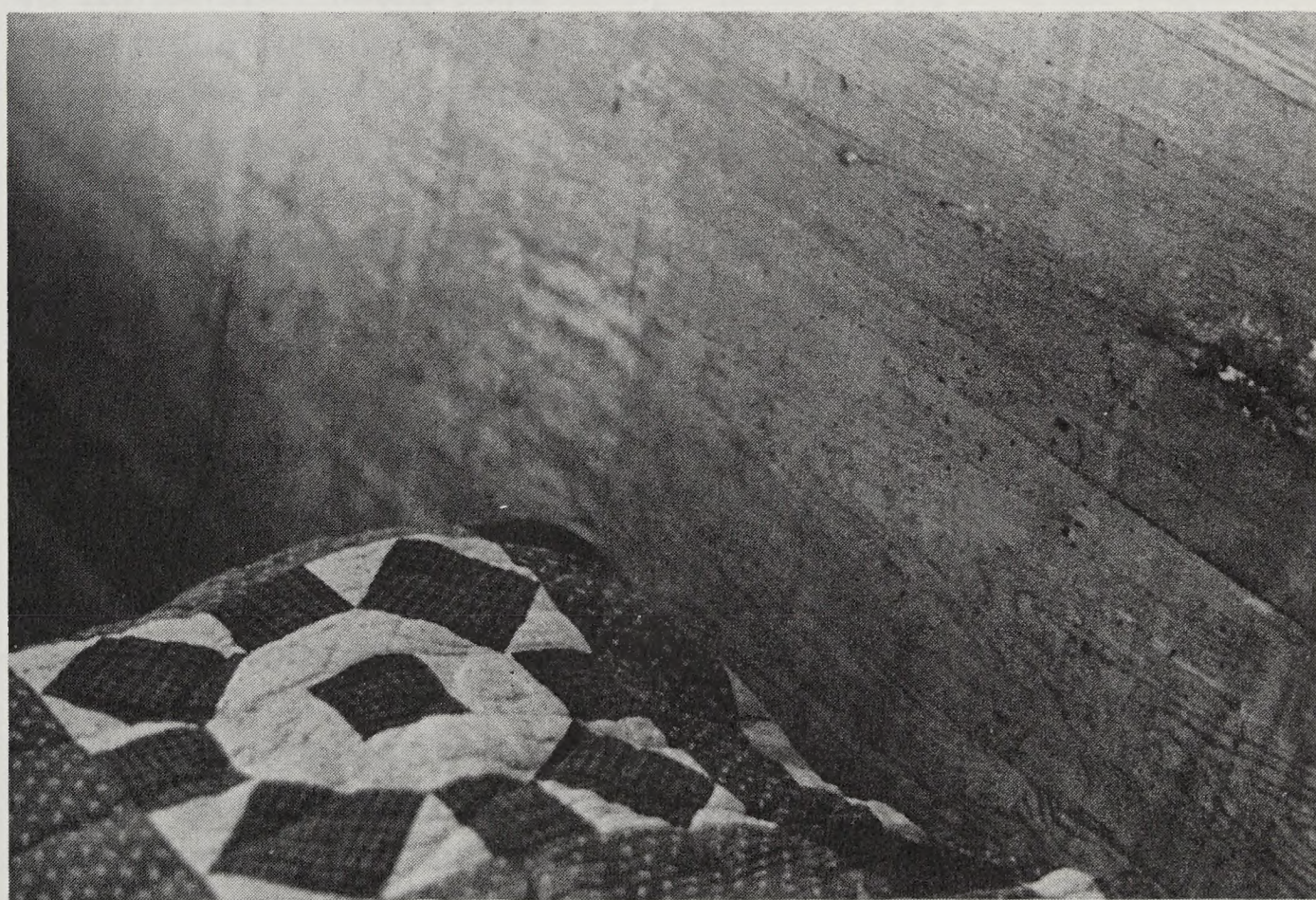


Fig. 6. Wall paneling and quilt in the southwest corner bedroom of house's main section.

placed much closer to the outside wall and emerges behind the ridgepole. Chimney bricks in both are hand-made, but differ in color and sharpness from one chimney to the other, further indicating two distinct construction dates. The emphasis given the earlier fireplace lends further support to our sense that an initial Quaker-plan style was extended to the south by a Georgian-style overlay.

Other plain/stylish contrasts are found in the internal decoration of the house. Hugh Dixon had no mantelpieces built; the fireplaces are simply plastered over. Walls and ceilings were given the common coat of whitewash throughout. In contrast are nice decorative touches like the deep green paint found in the woodwork, window frames, and door stiles in both rear bedrooms. The pale turquoise paint on the panels of both bedroom doors and the built-in wardrobe in the northwest bedroom also appears to be original. This wardrobe, built of pine or cedar panels with black walnut stiles and rails with wood-buttoned closings, was a useful and attractive item. A second one was built in the southwest bedroom with a later addition to the house. One of the area's skilled furniture makers was perhaps responsible for these well-crafted items.

Decorative elements on the outside of the house show Dixon's continued concern with simplicity as well as with stylishness. On the threshold, the Greek Revival two-panel double doors are set off by sidelights. Here the wide pine sheathing used internally is brought to the outside, marking the transition area between porch and front hallway. The six-over-six windows are also in the Greek Revival style. The influence of the Gothic Revival is seen in the gable addition, the curved brackets between the porch posts, and in the "Chinese" latticework on both the front and side porches. These decorations were machine-made, as were the Italianate brackets beneath the eaves. The range of interests indicated by Hugh Dixon's library suggests that he may have been influenced by some popular literature of the era, like *Rural Architecture* or *Farm Buildings*. Still the lack of ostentation in these decorations shows Dixon's adherence to the ideal of Quaker "plainness."

Later nineteenth-century additions and alterations to the house continue the pattern of stylish ideas and indifferent construction. Necessitated by the increased number of people in the house, the quality of this expansion was tempered by the economic stagnation of the farm and the area. In 1880 there were eight people living in the house. It seems likely that among them were Dixon's oldest daughter Mary and her husband Zeno Dixon, who from 1882-86 tried—and failed—to revive the flagging Sylvan School. They may have overseen the additions to the house and the ell which took place sometime in Hugh Dixon's early sixties.¹⁸



Fig. 7. Interior of flower house addition in southern elevation of house.

The addition to the south side of the house meant a more spacious parlor and bedroom, with internal fireplaces; the dining area in the expanded ell now had two bedrooms leading into it. The unique skylight in the dining room brought more light into the area darkened by this addition. The six-paneled glass and wooden doors in this room are reminiscent of the stylish two-paneled doors found in the 1866 section of the house. Yet the new bedrooms in the ell have low, sagging ceilings and walls made of inexpensive vertical beaded boarding. One has a plain batten door leading into the kitchen. The pass-through pantry and cupboard between the kitchen and dining room was a clever idea, useful in storing and serving food for large numbers of people. But its low-quality construction repeats the pattern set elsewhere: form does not quite live up to conception.

The even later addition of the flower house to the new southern section destroyed the initial attempted symmetry of Dixon's house. Since this structure is placed to the side, rather than hidden at the rear of the house, frontal formality is displaced. Here the house style reverts back to older, more organic and less symmetric folk building traditions. It reflects the economic and social decline of the family and of the community.

After Hugh Dixon died in 1901, his house was rented out to various families. Some of them were connected to the public Sylvan School

which replaced the private one; others were farmers. Sarah Kimball's parents—Quakers and farmers—moved to the house in 1931 and bought it in the next decade. During that time, outbuildings typical to the Upland South were constructed, exhibiting both vernacular and modern features. For reasons of ecology as well as style, the barn was relocated from its original creekside site in front of the house to the hill behind it. Sarah Kimball remembers hauling bags of corn down to the old Simon Dixon grist mill until 1946, when the structure was bought and torn down.¹⁹

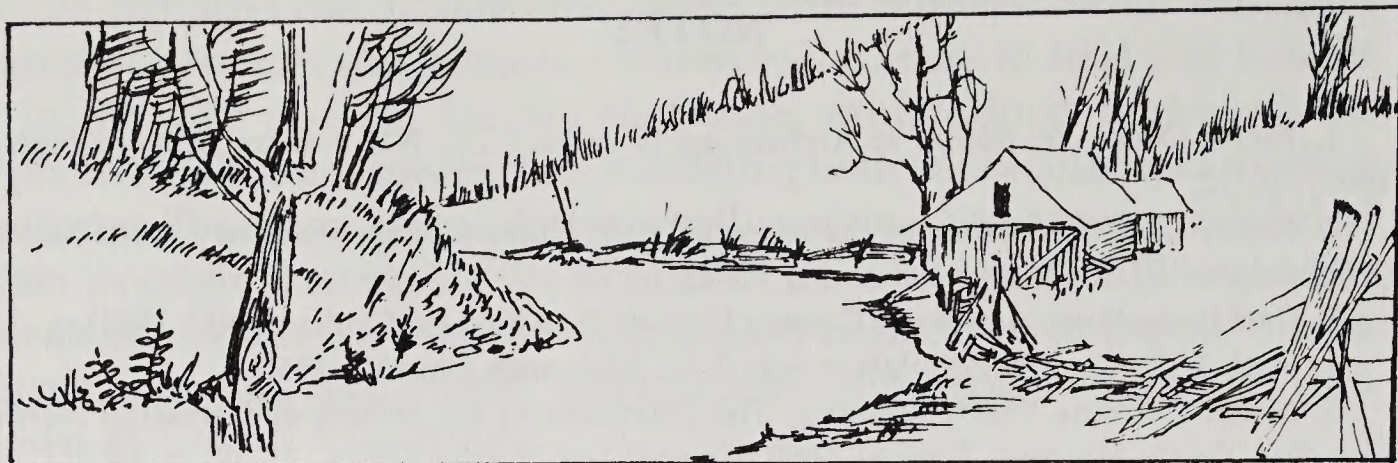
The Kimballs' traditional usages of house, outbuildings, and land show the influence of the previous use of the Dixon property, while demonstrating the continued rural folk patterns of the Piedmont and the changes wrought by modernization. The homestead still shapes and is shaped by the values, economics, and lifestyle of those using it.

Thus described in its physical and cultural settings, the Hugh Dixon house still poses a problem of the degree to which it can be considered a folk structure. Its site placement, design, and use show a symbiotic relationship between nature, human life, and the creative use of new concepts and techniques. With the expansion and decline of the dwelling over time, we see a flow of function from section to section: from the original cabin to the "public" part of the new house, then—in recent years—back to the original hearth area. The multiple uses of space which characterize folk dwellings have in this house been conditioned by popular culture's more rigid division of function. Yet the folk culture has always been flexible enough to allow for variations upon a theme. Hugh Dixon's eclectic combination of crude construction methods and various popular styles, both conditioned by the requirements of his folk tradition, was characteristic of vernacular housing as it developed in the last third of the nineteenth century.

As a "fossilized idea," this house speaks of a culture which is past, and yet which gives clear shape to the present. Standing upon the threshold between the mass popular culture of this century and the agrarian folklife of the last, the Hugh Dixon house makes an innovative statement about traditional patterns. It does so in a manner which will not be repeated, but which can be understood.

NOTES

1. James Deetz, *Invitation to Archeology* (Garden City, NY: Natural History Press, 1967), p. 12.
2. Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia: U. Of Pennsylvania P., 1968), p. 16.
3. Carl Lounsbury, *Alamance County Historic Sites Survey* (Graham, NC: 1981), p. 1.
4. Sixth U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Alamance County, 1840.
5. North Carolina Yearly Meeting, *The Discipline of the Society of Friends of North Carolina Yearly Meeting, Revised 1869* (Greensboro: Patriot Office, 1870), p. 54.
6. Jules Karlin, *Joseph M. Dixon of Montana: Part I: Senator and Bullmoose Manager, 1867-1917* (Missoula, MT: U. of Montana P., 1974), p. 4.
7. Seventh U.S. Census, Agricultural Schedule, Chatham County, Upper Regiment, North Carolina, 1850.
8. Lounsbury, p. 3.
9. Lounsbury, pp. 14-15.
10. McKeldon Smith discusses the equal prevalence of the hall parlor and Quaker plan houses in Guilford County and the advent of the central passageway in the antebellum period ("Guilford County: The Architectural Traditions in an Exclusively Vernacular Landscape," in *Carolina Dwelling*, Ed. Doug Swaim [Raleigh: N.C. State U. Student Publication, 1978], pp. 150-59).
11. "Hugh W. Dixon," *The Guilford Collegian* (Greensboro: Guilford College, 1900), XII:5, 152.
12. Hugh Woody Dixon, ledger book for the Ore Hill Co., p. 114 (owned by Sarah Kimball, Snow Camp, NC).
13. Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 74.
14. Wade Hampton Hadley, in *Chatham County 1771-1971* (Durham: Moore, 1976), cites sources that describe a Quaker settlement in the western section of the county not very far from Snow Camp. A number of Quaker homes were built near a 1751 meetinghouse, each of which had a walled spring and springhouse. This Pennsylvania penchant for stone, found in Chatham, lends credence to the idea of a pre-1866 homesite on the Dixon property complete with stone springhouse.
15. Interview, Sarah Kimball, 15 March 1980, Snow Camp, NC.
16. The Moses Pike house in Snow Camp, c. 1856, is a well-built Quaker plan house. Located on the road between Hugh Dixon's house and the Cane Creek Meeting, it is a structure which he would likely have known well.
17. Lounsbury, p. 72.
18. Carl Lounsbury dated these additions between 1866 and 1900. For the reasons described above and the 1901 date of Hugh Dixon's death, it seems reasonable to place the construction date in the earlier part of this period.
19. Max Way of the Alamance County Planning Department told me he had heard that wood from this eighteenth-century mill had been taken to Durham to become part of the Angus Barn restaurant. His statement has folkloric value, even if its true historical value has yet to be assessed.



1984 W. Amos Abrams Prize

The Constant Aesthetic of Bobby McMillon: “I’ve Just Always Tried to Find Any Old Song or Story That I Could”

by Ken Kenkel

I first learned of Bobby McMillon through tapes I came across in my work in the Folklore Archives at the University of North Carolina. These recordings of riddles, tales, and songs that he knows, all entertaining and most traditional, sparked my interest. A little research determined that his song repertory included Child ballads from Europe, native American ballads, various lyric and instrumental songs of American folk origins, as well as a few songs written relatively recently. His riddles and stories are equally representative cross-sections of American folklore. Wondering how and where he had learned all of this, I asked around and found out that McMillon was born in western North Carolina and was taught the songs and stories by relatives and friends. But I also discovered that he is only in his thirties, came across the Child collection of ballads by chance as a student in high school, and now works as a Folk Artist in the Visiting Artists program of North Carolina. Intrigued, I arranged an interview with him.

Ken Kenkel, a native of Kentucky, is doing graduate work in the Curriculum in Folklore at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. His essay on Bobby McMillon was originally a paper for a course with Dan Patterson.

What emerged from our conversation, and what I present here, is that Bobby McMillon was born and raised in a folk cultural setting, later became aware of his traditions as folklore, and now presents riddles, tales, and songs in formal public settings. This was not a simple change from being a member of a folk group to a folklorist to a Folk Artist, but rather a complex process which cuts across these three contexts and is held together by McMillon's deep affection for the traditional material.

Bobby McMillon was born in Lenoir, North Carolina, in 1951. His mother's family is from the Yancey and Mitchell County area of North Carolina, and his father's folks come from Cooke County, Tennessee. While Cooke is in another state, it is only about ninety miles away, just across the state line. Lenoir is in Caldwell County, and it, Yancey, and Mitchell counties of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Cooke County of the Smoky Mountains, all share the general designation of being in the Appalachian Mountain chain. Thus, while McMillon's parents' families moved to Lenoir shortly after World War II, they shared a regional heritage, if not a local one. Bobby's close contacts with both sides of the family, as well as with friends from the Lenoir area, exposed him to a wealth of traditions.

To some extent, this may read like a stereotypical background for a man who sings ancient ballads. He and his parents were born and raised in Appalachia, an area once geographically, economically, and socially isolated that has been romantically viewed as a "survival" of frontier times. But Bobby McMillon was born in 1951—by the time he arrived, good transportation, industry, and mass communication had long been part of Appalachian life. So he is not an old man, retaining traditions from distant childhood when Appalachia, like most of rural America, was rich in traditional ways. He is a young man, who grew up in a complex cultural atmosphere in a complex time. Movies and television reached more and more people in the 1950s and 1960s, supplanting to some extent the role of storytelling in homes. This was also a time of sweeping change in music, and I wondered how McMillon, as a singer and musician, was affected. He acknowledged having listened to the various forms of popular music of the time—Rock, revival Folk music, Bluegrass, and Country—but said that at heart he was something of a "purist," and still enjoys the old ballads and early Country music, with its ties to both folk and popular music. In general, then, exposed to everything from Child ballads and haint tales to the Beatles and "Gilligan's Island," Bobby somehow always favored the older ways.

Even within the context of the thoroughly modern '50s and '60s, though, there were plenty of older ways to attract McMillon. But to say that he grew up in a context conducive to the learning of oral traditions

does not convey the feeling of such an atmosphere. In my interview with him, Bobby talked about some of the traditions to which he was exposed:

Well, my dad's people were Primitive Baptists. And so they kept a lot of . . . old traditions in that church. . . . They lived in a part of the mountains where there was a lot of traditional stories and old customs. . . . And my grand-dad is kin through his father's people to a guy that was pretty famous in Yancey County in the 1800s, a big bear hunter. They called him Big Tom Wilson. . . . he was one of the fellers that found Dr. Mitchell's body when he got killed up there on Mt. Mitchell. . . . And then another of his cousins, . . . my third cousin, but generations back, was Charles Silvers, whose wife killed him, and cut him up and burned the body. . . . I went to school in Caldwell County, [and] a lot of my friends are related by blood to Tom Dooley and the girl that he murdered, so I got a lot of good stories from people right there in that neck of the woods where that happened.¹

From the conservative nature of his father's family's religion to the many legends of famous (and infamous) people of the area, it is clear that oral traditions were all around McMillon. But the simple existence of these factors does not by itself constitute oral transmission. This of course requires individuals willing to share their thoughts. Bobby told me who some of these people were:

I would listen to my parents tell stories about things that happened to them, or people that they knew, get my grandfather to tell me things. My mother's mom and dad, they helped raise me for most of my life. The things that I learned from them always stuck with me, more than the things I would learn from other people. . . . And from my aunt's in-laws, I learned a lot of old stories. [Her father's] father was a Free Will Baptist circuit rider. He [her father] had a lot of stories to tell about east Tennessee and western North Carolina from his father. He knew a lot of booger tales, haint tales, that he'd tell us young uns. And then his wife, Granny Hopson, she'd sing a lot of the songs that she remembered. She'd rock the young uns to sleep singing old songs . . . I always loved to talk with them about the old days.

In McMillon's mind each song and story he knows is tied to the person that taught it to him. Thus the thriving body of tradition in the area—the legends, tales, and songs—was passed along to Bobby on a one-to-one basis, and the people who passed them along remain as important to him as the body of tradition. It was in this context, then, as a member of a folk community still vital in a time of mass media, that Bobby McMillon's interest in old customs was developed and nurtured.

But he came to see the traditions he grew up with in a new light—he came to see them as folklore. As he became more interested in music, he began to realize something of the connections between popular culture and the tradition that surrounded him. McMillon recalled his early interest in music, at about age twelve:

My grand-dad had . . . an old talking machine, Victrola, at his house at the . . . community where he lived. And I'd play those records and get interested in the music. Then I found out that a lot of the older people had originally

sung these songs. [The songs] the Carter Family recorded—many of them were traditional ballads that they just worked up to put on record. This discovery was followed by others, which led him into full contact with folklore scholarship:

... about two years later I stumbled across the *Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*. Our library at Lenoir had a set. And I was going through that, and I realized—well, here they had the A version and the B. . . . the music evidently was sung by a lot of different people and came down to us in different forms. That's how I got my first knowledge of just how old some of the stuff was, because it had a lot of footnotes about where it came from. And through that I found out what the Child collection was.

So along with his early exposure to and interest in traditional songs in their traditional context, Bobby could see how the folklorists viewed them. More direct influence along this line came from contact with Dr. Cratis Williams, a folksong scholar at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. McMillon's high school English teacher arranged their first meeting when Bobby was a sophomore:

She knew that I was interested in old songs, and so, she had taken a course, that folksong course under Cratis Williams at Appalachian when she'd been in college. And she arranged an appointment for me to meet him. . . . And he showed me sort of how to document it, and what kind of information to put about it. And I remember, he told me at the time that at some date . . . it would probably be valuable to me, and mean more to me than I could probably see at the time.

There are striking parallels between McMillon's and Williams' first contacts with folksong scholarship that serve to illustrate how Bobby is and is not a folklorist.

Like McMillon, it was Williams' high school teacher back in eastern Kentucky who played an important role in his introduction to folklore as an academic pursuit. Dr. Williams described this in his article "Ballad Collecting in the 1930's."

When I became interested in the ballad as something apart from myself I was a sophomore in high school. . . . After I had sung the ballad ["Barbara Allen"], the teacher turned aside for ten minutes or so and told me how extremely important it was that I try to record all the songs that all of my people knew and try to remember the tunes, because they were disappearing and should be preserved for posterity. I was at the time fourteen or fifteen years old, but I began collecting.²

Somewhat ironically, McMillon shared this concern for the disappearing ballads, forty years later:

I began to realize that there was no telling how many of the songs were being lost, because of the older people dying out that knew them.

Both Williams and McMillon had relatives and neighbors with strong musical traditions, but once inspired to collect songs more formally,

they encountered problems getting ballads onto paper. When Williams heard of an old ballad, he relates:

I would get on the mule, ride over there, hear that person sing, and write down what I could. Sometimes that was difficult because the old person who started a song would sing faster than I could write. I would stop the song and ask that the last verse be repeated. . . . The tunes that interested me I learned by memory, because I did not know music. I simply listened and learned by imitation.³

Bobby also wrote the songs down, but he benefited from technological advances unavailable to Williams in the 1930s:

What I did to begin with, once I began to write down the one that I didn't know from memory—before I had a tape recorder . . . when Mawmaw Phillips would sing for me, or whoever, I'd make them go back, so I could write it down while they were singing it. I just had to memorize the tune. And then later on, after I got a tape recorder, I could go back to that pretty much. . . . So I'd always try to go back, later on, like lines that they'd forgotten, find out if they could remember what that was.

By their own descriptions, then, the process of recognizing ballads as folklore and the collecting techniques of Dr. Williams and Bobby McMillon were quite similar. Connecting McMillon to Williams in this fashion leads to the conclusion that Bobby, after his contact with folklore scholarship, is best described as a folklorist. After all, he had seen the work of the academic elite and been influenced by it. But there are important differences between the two men that cast doubt on this conclusion.

Cratis Williams studied ballads at a time when folklorists were still struggling to establish folklore as worthy of study, and he was enthralled by the scholarship of the day:

When Professor Dantzler interpreted "The Twa Corbies," "Edward," and "The Wife of Usher's Well," I saw for the first time that the ballad is really great literature, that it lends itself to all sorts of humanistic approaches and interpretations. . . . He prepared me then to become acquainted with ballad structure, themes, and scholarship and to develop a critique for the ballad so that I would know quality when I came upon it.⁴

However, Williams also wrote that at the time, "I wasn't proud of local ballads," and that "I was still deeply ashamed of mountain music. The only thing respectable about studying the ballad had to do with the actual matter of the ballad itself."⁵ This is not to condemn Williams for not seeing the value of the whole body of local traditions—this was the attitude of folksong scholarship of the time. Furthermore, he went on to a distinguished career as administrator and scholar, serving as a spokesman for the cultural wealth of Appalachia. And that is precisely the point—his approach to ballads and to Appalachia is that of a scholar.

Bobby McMillon, on the other hand, not as enmeshed in the early folksong scholarship, saw ballads both as important survivals and as only part of a singer's repertory.

When I could get any of my people that I knew that sang, I tried to find out the oldest ones they could remember. You know, things that they hadn't heard from radio, or things like that. Of course, with time and experience, I began to find out that the old timers didn't put any distinctions between types of music. . . . I had a great aunt. Taught me more of the songs I guess than any other one person ever did. She would sing one love song like . . . "The House Carpenter" . . . and then she'd turn around and sing "The Window Up Above," which was written by George Jones. . . . she just loved music. . . . Well I guess to Mawmaw Phillips, "The Window Up Above" might have been just as old as "Black Jack David," in her mind.

Bobby also made it clear that although he was "collecting" songs, he still strongly identified with the people he talked to.

In a sense it was easier for me to get to them than it would be for a person from outside. . . . one feller that I knew that taught me a lot of the songs, he was from Pottertown up in Watauga County. And I got to be real good friends with his father, and although his community wasn't next door to mine, he accepted me just like a neighbor from down the road or something. . . . I could get to a lot of people, and a lot of times knew what to ask, simply because I had the same background, and knew pretty much what they were thinking.

These remarks point out the mixture of folk and folklorist in Bobby—since he shared the singer's background, he was more effective in "getting to" people to collect songs.

This mixture is also evident in a brief article McMillon wrote for a special issue of *Southern Exposure*. In his article, "The Old Man Was a King—Or Something," McMillon gives an excerpt from a tale told to him by a fellow worker at a furniture factory, and then writes:

Mr. Kirby should not be thought of as one of those fleeting carriers of tradition that many academics (and other collectors of folklore) seem to be always on the lookout for, ere they all become extinct. To me he is a friend and neighbor who, because of our close association at work and my enthusiasm for such things, was willing to share some of his personal memories of time gone by.⁵

About another man and his tale, he writes:

Versions of tales like this are legion; whether they developed spontaneously or sprang from one source doesn't matter, for all of them are right. What does matter is that Paw made the tale come alive for me. I can still see him in his chair, knocking ashes from his well-used pipe, and hear his resonant voice, now silent, conveying pictures in my mind through the melody of his words. And now Paw and his tales live on—though he tarried to tell them in that world over "yonder"—in the memories and lives of his children, grandchildren, and me.⁶

Thus, while aware of the academic perspective, as seen in his remarks on "fleeting carriers of tradition" and the question of the origin of a

folktale, folktales and their tellers have a much more personal meaning for Bobby. Sharing experiences and community with these people, he chooses to enjoy, rather than interpret.

But McMillon's fascination with traditional material existed before his contact with folklore scholarship. Reflecting on Dr. William's prophecy that Bobby would come to value the old songs he knew, he remarked, "And one reason I'll never forget that is that I always considered that was just something that I enjoyed doing, simply because I'd grown up with it." That is the key—McMillon had a strong interest in old songs and tales from an early age, both through old records as well as relatives and neighbors in the area. Later, becoming acquainted with the Brown Collection, the Child ballads, and Dr. Williams showed Bobby the broader significance of the songs, and he also became aware of folktale analysis. Thus, he was now able to view the traditions he grew up with as folklore, in a cultural context as well as a local one, but did not go on to a career as a folklorist.

McMillon's contact with the field of folklore led to yet another context for the traditions he carries—he is now, to use the official title, a Folk Artist. Tracing his path to this position and examining his comments on this work will show how he now combines his folk heritage, his knowledge of folklore as a scholarly pursuit, and his entertaining skills to fit this new context.

After getting to know Cratis Williams, Bobby sometimes appeared in his stead at speaking engagements Williams could not attend. Bobby recalled,

I think the first time I sang ballads for anybody, I believe it was a senior citizens group in Lenoir. I thought at the time, "Wow, what they want to hear me sing for?" Cause I never considered myself, at the time, a performer, or interpreter, or whatever you want to call it.

Later on, in 1973, McMillon went to various music festivals and got to know some of the people who ran them. He got on stage a few times, but remembered that he still "didn't know how to act." Even so, Bobby was beginning to carry his traditions into a performance role.

The year 1974 was a time of change for McMillon. He had attended a community college off and on and held a few jobs, but now he went to work full time at the Broyhill furniture factory in Lenoir. The same year, he made contacts that eventually led to his work as a Folk Artist. A friend of his was taking a folklore course with Dan Patterson at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and suggested Bobby visit it. Not only did this lead to campus appearances through Patterson, but meeting students in the class also led to performances. George Holt, then a Duke University student and now Director of Folklife Programs for the North Carolina Arts Council, put on a folklife festival in 1975 and invited Bobby to perform. Allen Tullos, a graduate student in

folklore at Chapel Hill at the time, had a job with the Smithsonian's bicentennial program the following year, and included McMillon in a North Carolina group he took to Washington.

But throughout this period, Bobby had to work these appearances into his work schedule at the furniture factory. Then in 1978, he decided he had enough of Broyhill and, following George Holt's advice, McMillon applied for a job in the Artists in the Schools program as a Folk Artist. He was accepted and worked for a year at St. Pauls, North Carolina, in the public school system. He then entered the Visiting Artist program, in which the artist is based at a community or technical college, but may give programs for many different groups in the area. Bobby has worked in three different community colleges in the program and has now completed his fourth and final year of eligibility. He most recently worked at Bladen Community College in Dublin, North Carolina, about thirty miles south of Fayetteville.

Clearly Bobby McMillon has come a long way, from simply picking up bits of folklore for his own interest to occasional performances to a full-time job as a Folk Artist. But his current role, while not a recreation of the context in which he learned his songs and stories, is also not a commercialized departure from it.

Some of McMillon's remarks about his work as a Folk Artist show that although he now presents his traditional material in a different setting, he is not simply an entertainer. For instance, he combines performance with comments in a folkloristic vein. Bobby described a typical program:

I usually sing two or three songs, and tell them a story, maybe go over some riddles, something like that. Just basically tell them that every community and every family has their own tradition, and it's not just one particular thing like music, but it's also games, and riddles. . . . Anything like that's part of our folk heritage. And so I basically just try to put them in touch with their roots like that.

Along this line, at St. Pauls he carried out a number of activities to expose the students and the community to folklore, including everything from a festival to picking banjo as inspiration for a typing class. He enjoyed his work there:

When I was at St. Pauls—I feel like the Artists in the Schools is more suited for my line of work than the Visiting Artist, cause up there, I was in one community, I was more in touch with everybody. I tried to apply what I did in as many different ways as I could. . . . That's one reason I feel like it's more useful, and I felt more successful in that type of capacity, because I was working one-to-one with kids. And I could utilize it in a lot of ways—if I'd gone up on stage I couldn't have conveyed it to them on stage like I could being with them.

So in a sense he was able to create an atmosphere for face-to-face transmission of tradition. That McMillon was indeed trying to do so was made clear when he assessed his work in general.

I've really enjoyed it. And hope that it's made some mark. It's always been a compliment to me when somebody'd come up and say, "My grandchild just been singing that song that he heard you sing." Well that's how songs always got carried along, somebody hearing somebody else sing it. So, if one or two has learned something or caught something or remembered something that I've done, then I feel like it's been worthwhile.

Inevitably though, telling the riddles and stories and singing the songs he knows in front of audiences unfamiliar with the traditions meant that McMillon had to make some changes to be effective. Sometimes, he does not even have enough time to explain the background of the material he presents.

I don't consider myself an entertainer, but I have to sometimes cause . . . when you get so many people that you have to get around to, you can't help but have to try to do a whole lot in a short time. And so basically all they get out of it in many cases is just a performance, the program. And so I don't feel . . . that I'm accomplishing what I'd like to as much in that capacity.

Time constraints within individual programs affect the kind of material he presents. For example, he often finds that he does not have enough time to tell any riddles. Furthermore, the composition of his audiences—usually elementary school children—also imposes a selective pressure on McMillon's repertory of stories. He said the kids' favorites are "The Big Toe" and "The Two Sisters" (possibly related to the ballad), both of which involve grisly figures who leap out at the children at the end. But Bobby himself seems to prefer Jack tales and legends.

They like the tales where you jump at them, and scare them like. Them's probably the most popular ones that I've told them. If I have a long time to talk with them I'll tell them maybe an old Jack tale or something like that. But they like booger tales.

Another comment Bobby made shows the difference between the context in which he tells tales now and how he learned them: "If I had the time, I'd tell them tales all night. Cause I could sit up all night listening to people telling tales." Clearly, he has made some adjustments to the setting of telling tales before audiences of children in a limited amount of time.

Turning to his songs, here too McMillon has adjusted, to a certain extent, both his style and repertory to suit his audiences. With the overwhelming importance of instruments in current popular music, it is not surprising that Bobby chooses to accompany himself on guitar on songs he learned to sing a capella.

The ones that I do mainly on the guitar are songs that are in major keys, that sound pretty bland without an instrument. I always feel like the guitar helps them. But usually the songs are in a minor key, I usually do them a capella. . . . Occasionally I'll play a song like that on the guitar, like "Little Margaret" or "Lord Thomas." I think it sounds better for an audience to do it that way, but if I were doing it just for you or around home or something like that, I feel like the tune's much sweeter without any accompaniment at all.

Accompanying himself on guitar creates subtle but noticeable changes in McMillon's singing style, as I realized after listening to recordings of him performing the same songs with and without accompaniment. Singing unaccompanied, Bobby reflects the ballad style of western North Carolinians like Dillard Chandler, with its rich ornamentation, grace notes at the end of lines, and irregular rhythm. But when adding Carter Family style guitar playing, McMillon tends to conform his voice to the range of the guitar chords. Thus, he sings with less ornamentation, few or no grace notes, and in a regular and slightly faster rhythm. While a departure from the traditional style, this style is probably more accessible to his modern, youthful audiences.

McMillon also makes less subtle changes in vocal style. On some songs, "When Are You Coming to See Me" and "Our Goodman," for example, he uses special vocal effects, like imitating a drunk and singing in falsetto to indicate a woman's line. This adds to the humor of these comic songs.

The difference in musical taste between McMillon and his audiences and the fact that his programs must be fairly standardized for the many classes in a single school mean that the songs he performs are not representative of his entire repertory. I asked him, "Do you have any favorite songs that you sing, or some you sing more than others?" He replied:

Yeah, I'll tell you the ones I sing more than others, but they're not my favorites any more. I hate that so many of the songs and stories that I always loved . . . I've done so much till . . . they don't mean to me what they used to. I finally grew accustomed to it till now . . . I probably don't put as much feeling in because I sing without hardly being aware of what I'm doing. It's automatic, some of them.

Bobby said that some of his favorites were "The Old Church Yard," "The House Carpenter," and "The Wife of Usher's Well"—all in the ballad style—but that he performs "The Old Man Under the Hill" and "Our Goodman" more than any others—both humorous songs. In general then, he says that "I like the old story songs the best," but

they like the funny songs the best. Most of them, they only see me maybe once or twice a year, they're wanting to hear something humorous. They're not looking deeper into it. They just like the words, and what happens, and think it's cute.

While the changes Bobby has made in his storytelling and singing to adjust to his role as Folk Artist may seem extensive, they have roots in his past. The tales he tells, for example, are geared to children, but that is how he learned the booger tales himself—as a child, being entertained by older relatives. Similar observations can be made about his music. His guitar playing style is reminiscent of the Carter Family, a group he heard on his grandfather's Victrola. And even his dramatization of "Our Goodman" is in some sense traditional: although he came

up with the falsetto part on his own, the first person he heard sing it was about half drunk at the time, and so Bobby always tries to sing it as he learned it. Finally, while the selection of songs he sings in front of the kids is skewed, since he tries to “do what they want,” they still come from the body of songs he learned from his family and friends. Thus, his work as a Folk Artist is still anchored in the traditions of his folk group back home.

Bobby McMillon now blends the traditions of his folk group with his knowledge of folklore and his performance skills. In doing so, he is able to pass these traditions in a new context, put children in touch with their own traditions, and if nothing else, entertain them. And while he may have done some stories and songs too often for his own taste, his enthusiasm for them still comes through.

McMillon’s path from the mountains of western North Carolina to his most recent job on the coastal plain was a winding one. Attempting to chart this trail has pointed out the inadequacies of the terms *folk*, *folklorist*, and *Folk Artist* as labels for him. He learned his riddles, stories, and songs in a traditional setting, but has also had a good deal of exposure to popular and elite culture. He is acquainted with folklore scholarship, but does not do research or teach in the typical academic setting. Lastly, he performs on stage professionally, but sees his role as that of a friend to, not just an entertainer of, the communities in which he works.

Unfortunately, however, putting children of various communities in touch with their roots and passing on traditional stories and songs have taken Bobby away from his roots and out of the setting in which he learned his traditions. He laments:

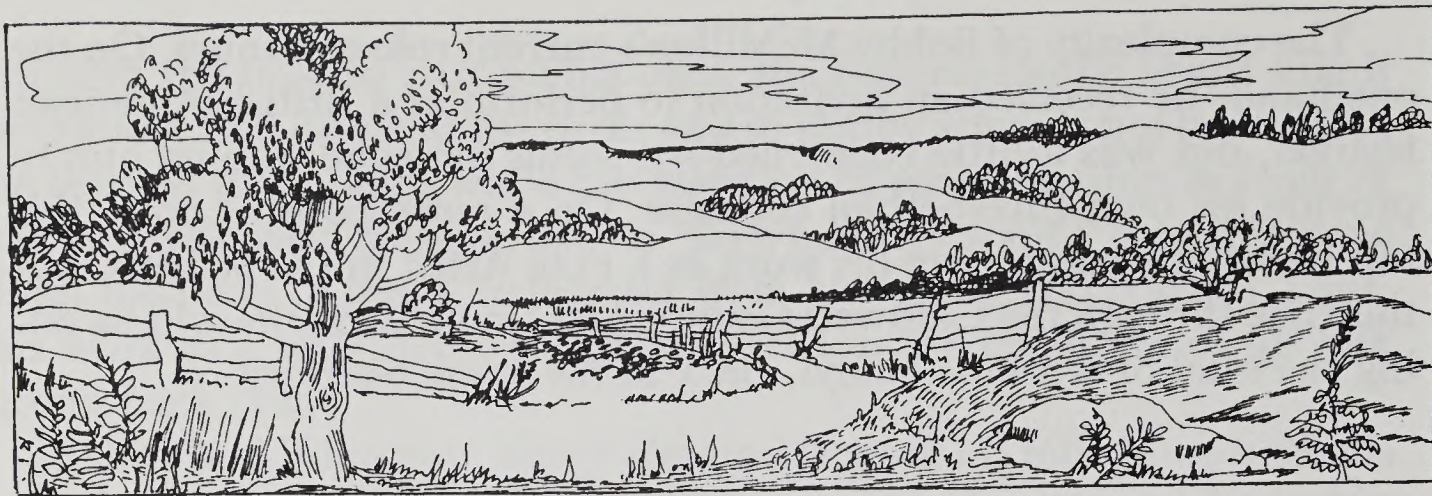
But for myself as a person, I’m not in my own element any more. And it didn’t stop because I left it . . . even when I was in the furniture factory . . . we all had stories and . . . I was still in what you might call a folk atmosphere, the lifestyle I grew up with. So, I miss that part of it, not having the chance to go home. And . . . I’ll always try to find songs, and learn new ones, and things like that, and I don’t get that opportunity as much now as I used to.

Here McMillon’s simple affection for the material and the context from which it came is clear, and this is what ties his various roles together—as a member of a folk group, as a folklorist, and as a Folk Artist, his love for the riddles, stories, and songs he grew up with and still seeks is constant.

The complexity of Bobby McMillon's current role continues. On the one hand, he received an invitation to perform at a British-American festival, but was a little concerned—it seems someone wanted him to provide his own Elizabethan costume. On a more positive note, this fall he will be continuing his work as a Folk Artist in the Schools, but this time through the Caldwell County Arts Council. So, he will be doing the kind of work he enjoys, back in his home territory.

NOTES

1. Tape-recorded interview with Bobby McMillon, Lumberton, NC, 20 March 1984.
2. Cratis Williams, "Ballad Collecting in the 1930's," *Appalachian Journal*, 7 (1-2), 33.
3. Williams, p. 34.
4. Williams, pp. 34-35.
5. Bobby McMillon, "The Old Man Was a King—Or Something," *Southern Exposure*, 9 (2), 26-27.
6. McMillon, p. 28.



I.O.O.F. Murals

by Stuart C. Schwartz

Recent research in Charlotte has discovered material culture artifacts important to the life of a North Carolina group at the turn of the century. Architectural research conducted by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission has uncovered wall murals in a hall where Independent Order of Odd Fellows lodges met from the 1870s though 1920.

The hall occupies the third floor of the Merchants and Farmers National Bank building, a three-story brick structure built in 1871-72 in the heart of the Charlotte business district and now the oldest commercial building in the central city. Its third floor has two rooms. One, a kind of ante-chamber and office, also contains a bathroom and stairway landing. From this back room, two glass-transomed doorways open into the large I.O.O.F. Hall. The doors contain peep holes; three tall windows facing the street light the hall. Remains of gas lights are evident in the hall ceiling, and a fireplace, now closed up in one wall, must have provided heat.

The Hall's most striking decorative features are partially revealed beneath peeling wallpaper. The red plaster walls display lodge symbols starkly painted in black and white with occasional touches of green and gold. Among the eerie images are angels, an hourglass, an all-seeing eye, a sun, and a skull and cross bones. These are painted on "panels" which are part of the Trompe-loeil decoration designed to give the hall a finished appearance. Columns and brackets with wainscoting below

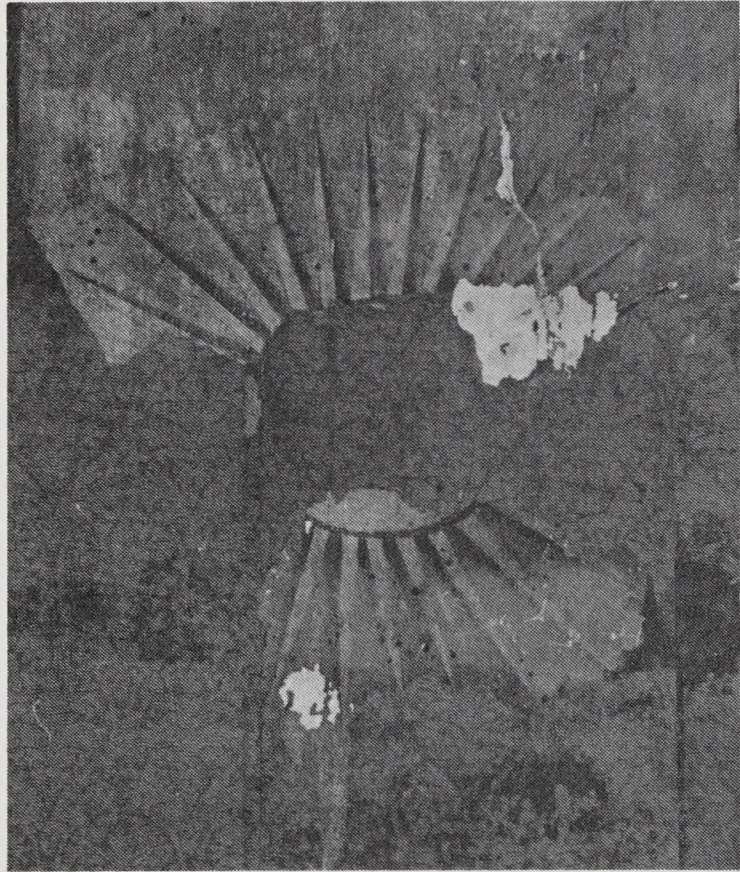
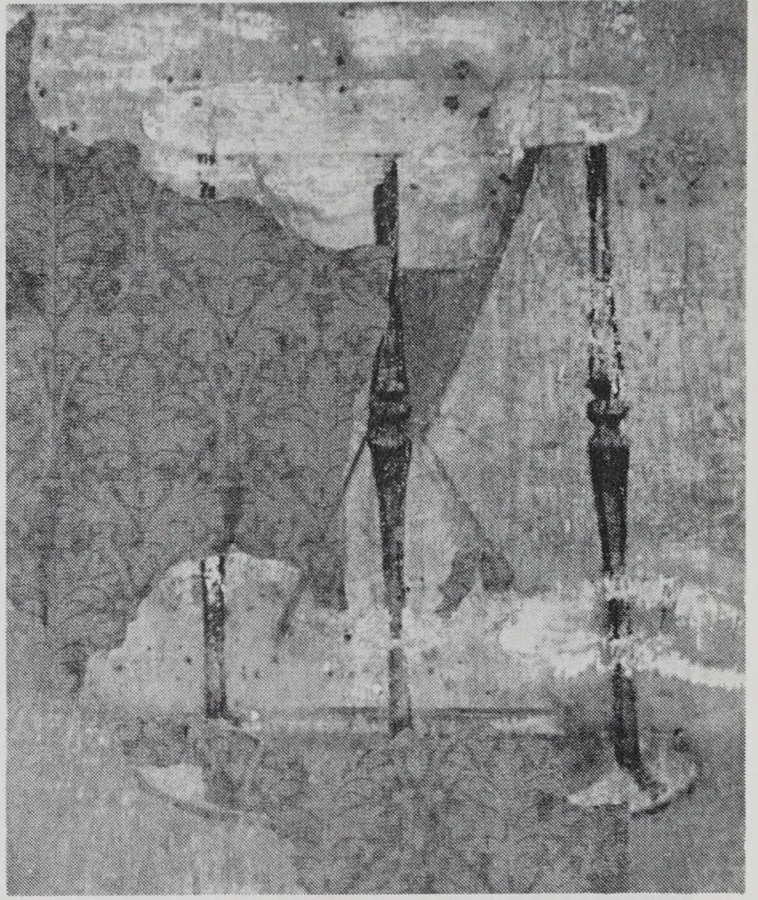
Stuart C. Schwartz is Curator of the Mint Museum of History in Charlotte.



Fig. 1. Angel mural with peeling wallpaper.

surround the panels. The high position of the symbols, eight to ten feet from the floor on two long walls, increases their powerful effect.

Historical records indicate that the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Mecklenburg Lodge #9, Charlotte's oldest Odd Fellows lodge, met in the building from 1875 through 1914. The Catawba River Encampment #21 I.O.O.F. used the hall in 1879 and '80, while from 1904 through '14, the Rosalie Lodge #22 Daughters of Rebekah, a women's group, also met there. Sometime after 1920 the room was wallpapered, a chairrail added, electric light fixtures installed, and metal picture molding run around the room about two feet below the high ceiling.



Figs. 2-5. Various wall mural patterns in I.O.O.F. Hall.

These murals, reflections of the style of an earlier era, are the only such paintings yet known in North Carolina. Research is continuing in an attempt to identify the painter and preserve these examples of a rare material culture form important to the folklife of Odd Fellows in the early part of this century.



“Some People Never Learn” (AT 777)

by Mac E. Barrick

There is nothing new under the sun, someone once said, and folktale researchers are constantly discovering that the most modern of folk narratives often has an ancient parallel or origin. Even the contemporary urban legend about black widow spiders building nests in bouffant hair styles and the current (often obscene) stories of organ transplants that subsequently embarrass the recipient have been traced to ancient variants.¹

It should therefore not be surprising that a tale collected in North Carolina by J. Mason Brewer should have a similarly ancient and noble pedigree. In *Worser Days and Better Times* Brewer includes a story titled “The Boy Who Played Jesus,”² of “a ol’ boy that lived out to Pleasant Plains, in Winton Township, what belong to dat ‘almos’-white’ bunch of folks dey calls ‘Free Issues.’ ”³ Discontent with his lot locally, the boy moves to New York where he rents a room, grows a “beet-nik” beard and starts looking for a job. One day a man remarks, “Man, you looks like Jesus”:

...so when de man tell him dis he hurry down to his li’l room an’ look in de lookin’-glass at hisse’f, an’ sho nuff, he do look like Jesus. No sooner’n he done peeked at hisse’f in de lookin’-glass he goes down to a Jew store on de corner an’ buys him a long white robe. Dat nex’ comin’ Sunday he puts de robe on an’ goes down to a big Baptist Church in Harlem, an’ starts walkin’ down de aisle towards de pulpit, when de preacher see him an’ say, “Hol’ de singin’ a minnit. Here comes Jesus. Let’s take up a collection for him.” So dey takes up \$200 an’ gives it to de ol’ boy. Dat nex’ comin’ Sunday he goes

Mac Barrick is a professor in the Foreign Languages Department at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, where he teaches Spanish and folklore.

down to a big Catholic Church an' goes in an' starts walkin' down de aisle wid his han's stretched out, so de priest sees him an' say, "Here comes Jesus, let's take up a collection for him." So dey takes up \$200 an' gives it to him. De ol' boy says to hisse'f, "I sho got sumpin good workin' for me now." So nex' comin' Sunday de ol' boy puts on his long white robe again, an' goes down to a Jew synagogue an' starts walkin' down de aisle wid his han's stretched out. Dere was two rabbis 'ductin de services, so when dey seed de ol boy walkin' down de aisle one of 'em yells to de other one, "Go an' git de hammer an' nails quick; de fool's off de cross again."

On the surface the story is a humorous anecdote, told ostensibly as a warning to "almos'-white" folks not to get uppity and try to move above their station, because someone sooner or later will put them back where they belong. However, if it is compared with the following story collected in Philadelphia in 1960,⁴ it acquires another meaning, one perhaps that is more important to the culture in which it circulated:

Jesus Christ came back to earth, and he was going around preaching, and everywhere he'd go, he'd say, "I'm Jesus Christ [pantomimed gesture of spread hands in an all-encompassing blessing], and everybody would be converted. He went to Washington, "I'm Jesus Christ" [gesture], and everybody was converted. Then he went to Russia, and went into the Kremlin, "I'm Jesus Christ" [gesture], and all the Russians were converted. He went to Rome, "I'm Jesus Christ" [gesture], and all the Catholics were converted. So finally, everybody in the world is converted, and he's in New York walking down the street when he sees this little Jewish shoemaker's shop, so he goes in and says, "I'm Jesus Christ" [gesture], and the little Jewish shoemaker goes [pantomimed nailing the spread hands to the wall], "Some people never learn."

The changing of the antagonist from a Jewish rabbi to a Jewish shoemaker is significant, first because the latter is a craftsman likely to have hammer and nails ready at hand, and second, according to medieval tradition, a Jewish shoemaker in Jerusalem reacted with like incredulity and cruelty at the time of the Crucifixion and was punished for it by being condemned to wander the earth until Christ returned. That peripatetic shoemaker became known in folklore as the Wandering Jew.⁵

The legend of the Wandering Jew arose from a confusion between the officer who struck Christ, usually mistakenly identified as Malchus,⁶ and thirteenth-century stories of aged pilgrims who had been condemned to wander the earth until the end of time. The man is first identified as a shoemaker in a Spanish satire, *El Crotalon* (attributed to Cristobal de Villalon), in 1557. Since the early seventeenth century, he has been known as Ahasuerus, on the basis of a German pamphlet of 1602.⁷

Stories of the Wandering Jew still surface occasionally. George Anderson describes their wide provenance: "The Wandering Jew will appear on Good Friday in some remote Italian village; at any moment

he may appear on the streets of New York.”⁸ But he is no longer the grieving, penitent old man yearning for release from his eternal punishment that was commonly depicted in earlier versions of the legend. Now he is the same unrepentant, God-challenging figure that the original Roman soldier must have been, and more importantly, he no longer wanders, but has settled down and opened a shoe repair service.⁹

If folk cultural materials, whether oral or physical, are to survive, they must retain a significance for the people who use and maintain them. Their form and function will change and adapt to the needs of each new generation. As Stith Thompson long since noted, folktales are re-formed at given stages of cultural development to the literary style in fashion at the time.¹⁰ In the Middle Ages they took the form of chivalric romance (which still influences traditional forms of the fairy tale) and the homiletic *exemplum*; in the sixteenth century they were perpetuated in the Italian *novella* style; in the eighteenth century, under the influence of the *Arabian Nights*, an Oriental tone prevailed, if not in the telling, at least in the printing, of folktales. So it is natural that in the late twentieth century, with an audience that has cut its wisdom teeth on the broad satire of *Mad* magazine and whet its taste for wit on the irreverent “Laugh In” and “Monty Python” television productions, the American folktale should reflect the cynical and sacrilegious spirit of the age.

Today’s fairy tale, as it occurs in oral circulation, is no longer Grimm, but grimy; even the long popular Disneyfication of “Sleeping Beauty” and “Cinderella” is sneered at by today’s sophisticated audience that looks for an X-rated movie version or finds a mildly erotic suggestiveness in the story of a young girl living with seven little men in the woods.¹¹ “The Frog Prince” is told most frequently today as an off-color joke about the results of a girl waking up with a young man (or just the untransformed frog) in her bed.¹²

The story of the Wandering Jew has undergone a similar transformation. In the Middle Ages, the penitent figure despairing of salvation was used as a warning to those who would deny the divinity and authority of Christ. By the nineteenth century, the Jew had become a legendary figure, though he was seen by those who interpreted the Scriptures literally as evidence that the prophecy in Matthew 16:28 and Luke 9:27 was still true.¹³

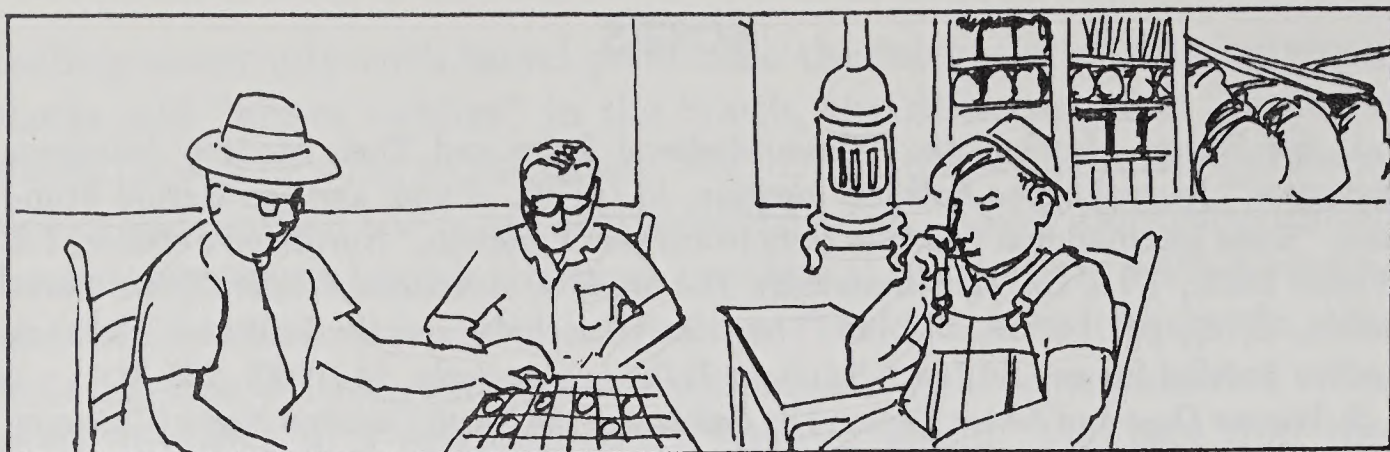
By the mid-twentieth century, the significance of the story was completely different, as evidenced by the two variants under consideration. In both, the Wandering Jew has become moderately successful with well-established roots, and it is the Christ-figure who is wandering and homeless. The North Carolina story is an anecdote

dealing essentially with racial problems: the interrelationship between blacks and “almos’-whites” in the South, the difficulty that Southern blacks face in moving to the urban North, and the antagonism between blacks and Jews in the large northeastern cities.¹⁴ The identification of the antagonists as Jewish is almost incidental, in keeping with a recurrent black stereotype that most New Yorkers are Jewish. In the Philadelphia version, the Jewish shoemaker is a representative of a small minority in a predominantly Gentile world. The fact that the narrator of this version was Jewish and took obvious delight in telling it changes the viewpoint and the underlying meaning of the tale. In the Brewer variant, the Christ-figure is identified as an impostor intent on profiting from his deception, hence deserving of the punishment threatened, but not carried out. In the Philadelphia story, the figure is Christ himself, who still, in the eyes of the Jewish narrator, is equally deserving of punishment as a false messiah and he receives it at the hands of the Jew. There is also in this version a clever satirical concept that “godless” Communists and even sincere Catholics are unsure of the truth of their beliefs, but the Jewish shoemaker is certain of his.

The punchline is delightfully ambiguous. On the one hand, it means that the Jewish shoemaker, after wandering for nearly two thousand years, has not learned from his experience. On the other hand, the Philadelphia narrator implies that messiah figures never learn and must suffer crucifixion with each new generation.¹⁵ At a time when we face sometimes wildly wandering versions of Christianity, the folk narrative in its joke form expresses a steady theme of Western religious skepticism. “The Wandering Jew” continues its own peregrinating with narrators adapting it to their modern contexts.

NOTES

1. See Shirley Marchalonis, "Three Medieval Tales and Their Modern American Analogues," *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 13 (1976), 173-84, and Jan Harold Brunvand, "Some International Folktales from Northwest Tradition," *Northwest Folklore*, 1:2 (Winter 1966), 7-13. Cf. also Brunvand's *The Study of American Folklore* (New York: Norton, 1978), pp. 140-42, and his "Thor, the Cheechako and the Initiate's Tasks: A Modern Parallel for an Old Jest," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 24 (1960), 235-38.
2. *Worse Days and Better Times: The Folklore of the North Carolina Negro* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1965), pp. 44-45.
3. See Bruce Jackson's review of Brewer, *Journal of American Folklore*, 79 (1966), 618.
4. The informant was a female Jewish graduate student in Spanish, then in her mid-twenties.
5. The bibliography on the theme is extensive, though amazingly none of it is listed in Aarne and Thompson's *The Types of the Folktale* (type 777). Three important early studies are Archer Taylor, "Notes on the Wandering Jew," *Modern Language Notes*, 33 (1918), 394-98 (extensive bibliography), A.M. Killen, "L'Evolution de la legende du Juif Errant," *Revue de litterature comparee*, 5 (1925), 5-37, and Joseph E. Gillet, "Traces of the Wandering Jew in Spain," *Romanic Review*, 22 (1931), 16-27. A good modern study is George K. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence, RI: Brown U. P., 1965).
6. See John 18:10, 22. The name later became changed to Buttadeus (literally, 'God-striker').
7. Ahasuerus, subject of *Kurtze Beschreibung und Erzählung von einem Juden mit namen Ahasverus*, was a Jerusalem shoemaker present at the Crucifixion; see Anderson, pp. 29-30 and 49-50.
8. Anderson, pp. 394-95.
9. In "The Door of Unrest" (*The Complete Works* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, 1936], pp. 672-78), O. Henry has him living unrecognized in a small Western town where he works as a cobbler.
10. *The Folktale* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1946), p. 406-07. Cf. Brunvand, *Study*, pp. 130-31.
11. A contemporary joking version of "Snow White" has a doctor examine her prior to her marriage to the Prince; he discovers her maidenhead is intact, but that there are seven little nicks along the edge (*Still More Playboy's Party Jokes* [Chicago: Playboy, 1968], p. 7).
12. Cf. John T. Flanagan, "Grim Stories: Folklore in Cartoons," *Midwestern Journal of Language and Folklore*, 1 (1975), 20-26, esp. 25-26; and a limerick of Ogden Nash wherein the prince and princess produce "four boys and a fine polliwog" (*New Playboy's Party Jokes* [Chicago: Playboy, 1970], p. 129).
13. See Joseph Gaer, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (New York: Mentor, 1961), p. 75-78.
14. Cf. Nat Hentoff, ed., *Black Anti-Semitism and Jewish Racism* (New York: R.W. Baron, 1969).
15. Cf. the graffiti from Columbia University noted in Marina Haan and Richard Hammerstrom, *Graffiti in the Ivy League* (New York: Warner, 1981), p. 61: "JESUS IS COMING! We'll get him again."



Reviews

The *North Carolina Folklore Journal* reviews books, records, and films on North Carolina folklife or on folkloristics pertinent to the study of our state's folklife. Generally we limit books on other states' folklore to descriptive notes in our quarterly *Newsletter*. Even your carpet-bagging Yankee editor realizes that the subject of the following review is a book on folklife not only north of Mr. Byrd's Dividing Line but also north of the Mason-Dixon Line. The points that Ms. Zygas discusses in her review, however, do involve issues important to narrative and regional studies and so we print them for their interest to members of our state folklore society.

Flatlanders and Ridgerunners: Folktales from the Mountains of Northern Pennsylvania. By James Glimm. Pp. xxxi + 199, preface, map, illustrations, notes. Pittsburgh: U. of Pittsburgh P., 1983. \$5.95 paper, \$11.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Egle Victoria Zygas.

Wedged in between the Pennsylvania-New York border on the north and the Appalachian Mountains on the south and east are the five counties whose oral lore appears in *Flatlanders and Ridgerunners: Folktales from the Mountains of Northern Pennsylvania*. The book contains over 250 narratives from Tioga, Bradford, Clinton, Lycoming, and Potter counties in northcentral Pennsylvania; all were collected by James Glimm, who teaches at Mansfield State College in Mansfield, Pennsylvania, or by his folklore students.

Egle Zygas, a graduate of the folklore program at Indiana University, worked as a folklorist for the state of Indiana and now works for the Illinois Arts Council in Chicago.

James Glimm is originally from Long Island, but he moved to the Pennsylvania mountains in 1968 to teach English at Mansfield State. In the book's preface he describes how ill-prepared he was for life outside his accustomed urban setting, how he had to learn "the right way to do things" from the natives who were his neighbors, and how he grew to appreciate them and their lifestyle. After writing an article on the area for a popular magazine and directing a federally-funded interview project in Tioga County, Glimm felt that he had not succeeded in penetrating the culture of the region or in understanding the personality of its people and decided that he needed formal training in folklore in order to achieve these goals. He spent a sabbatical year at the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh and a summer at the Folklore Institute at Indiana University. With this background in folklore fieldwork and study techniques, Glimm collected oral lore in an area extending roughly fifty miles to the east, south, and west of Mansfield. Aided by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, he prepared and annotated these materials for *Flatlanders and Ridgerunners*.

The "flatlanders" of the book's title refers to the outsiders (mostly urban and affluent) who vacation in the area around Pennsylvania's Appalachian Mountains and whose slick and arrogant ways pose a threat to the area's conservative culture. The cycle of flatlander tales told by the residents is a regional adaptation of traditional numskull tales and, as Glimm explains, the telling of the tales helps to resolve psychological tensions associated with this culture conflict. Sixteen examples of the cycle, telling how the canny mountain man outsmarts the city slicker, are the substance of the book's first chapter.

Although "flatlander" is a term really used by Glimm's informants, "ridgerunner" is a name which is not found in the texts. Its appearance only in Glimm's chapter introductions seems suspicious, and suggests that this word does not enjoy popular usage in the area.

The book's subtitle is similarly misleading: "Folktales from the Mountains of Northern Pennsylvania" leads the reader to expect something more than only ten folktales out of a total of 250 texts. The bulk of the book is made up of examples of a variety of other genres, from personal experience stories running several pages in length to proverbial expressions of less than ten words.

The texts have clearly undergone extensive editing: interviewers' questions and comments, tellers' digressions, and visitors' interruptions have been deleted throughout in order to make the book readable for a broad audience. In some instances, the text printed in the book is a composite of a number of variants collected by more than one fieldworker and from numerous informants. For a book intended for general reading, as *Flatlanders and Ridgerunners* is, the former approach is certainly understandable and the latter is, at least,

forgivable, since the composite texts are clearly identified as such in the “Notes” section. One very questionable practice, however, is the inclusion of a narrative which was not recorded in the field, but is a story which Glimm himself tells frequently about events which he has witnessed. (While Glimm is not the first folklorist to interview himself, he is probably the first English teacher actually to use expressions such as these in his own speech: “they wasn’t making it” [p. 77], “[he gutted a deer and then] drug her in” [p. 79], and “I seen them” [p. 81].) Oddly enough, the worst grammar to be found anywhere in the book occurs in Glimm’s own text. Non-standard verb forms are found here and there in some of the other narratives, but in most cases orthography is the sole indicator of folk speech (spelling *-ing* verbs as *-in’*, *them* as *’em*, and *of* as *o’* or *a’*, for instance). The story Glimm collected from himself is an anomaly and should not be considered along with the other texts, for his seems a stereotype or parody of folk dialect, whereas the other texts more truly represent unselfconscious oral speech.

The stories the people in “ridgerunner country” tell give voice to their day-to-day concerns—man’s interaction with nature (clearing and settling the land, logging, hunting, and fishing), as well as man’s interaction with his own community and the community of outsiders. The dynamics of taletelling, the settings where taletelling occurs, and some of the narrators are described briefly by Glimm in a section entitled “Collecting Folklore in North-Central Pennsylvania.” The narratives themselves are grouped into chapters along roughly thematic/generic lines—“Flatlanders and Ridgerunners,” “Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions,” “Tall Tales and Humorous Tales,” “The Running Gears of Hard Times: Personal Anecdotes,” “Customs,” “Tales of the Supernatural,” “Hog Wild: More Personal Anecdotes,” “Beliefs, Cures, and Preventions,” and “Animal and Fish Stories.” Except for the chapters on proverbs and cures (where absolutely no informant or contextual data have been provided), the book’s notes list the narrator’s name, the place of collection, and—when other than Glimm—the collector’s name. Unfortunately, summary documentation of this sort does not breathe life into the teller, explain why he or she narrates a particular story at a given time or tells tales at all. And Glimm’s interpretations, where they do exist, of the meaning behind the narrative are sometimes too facile. On p. 194, for example, he does not explain why a wet spot on a quilt in a haunted room represents sexual knowledge, rather than, perhaps, the manifestation of a revenant whose death was caused by drowning.

This is but one example of an overall casualness of approach that is the book’s most serious flaw. Beyond telling us too little about the tellers and their context, or about how he arrived at his interpretation

of the narratives' meanings, Glimm sometimes gives us wrong information (as when he states that supernatural tales have all but disappeared, while the tall tale and the personal tale have become more popular [p. 99]) or information that is incomplete (as when he explains that motif and tale-type numbers are used to indicate that a story has been collected in other parts of the English-speaking world, but fails to mention the universality of the themes; or as when he persists in calling every narrative a folktale, whether it is a tall tale, a personal experience story, or a legend).

Folklorists using *Flatlanders and Ridgerunners* as a reference for their own work or as a textbook in folklore classes will find these errors aggravating. The reader for whom the book is really intended, however, is not the researcher or the teacher, but the interested layperson. Such an audience is not acquainted with the characteristics which define folklore genres, the techniques of folk narrative analysis, or with systems of tale and motif classification (nor does it care to be), so no harm done. What is damaging to this audience, though, is Glimm's peculiar protean character. Although he reiterates his love of the area's people and their culture in numerous places through the book, he also offhandedly pronounces that "a class of fifth graders is about the best audience for tall tales that [he] can have [and he doesn't] know what this says about our tall-tale loving ancestors" (p. 29). When Glimm is not in the role of oh-so-sophisticated commentator, he adopts the guise of ridgerunner and travels around Pennsylvania playing his banjo and telling tales to anyone who will listen. By confusing himself with legitimate tradition bearers and his stories with traditional narrative at every turn, Glimm not only diminishes his informants, but he detracts from the richness of their narrative stock. The reader is never sure whether it is Glimm-the-researcher talking, or Glimm-the-performer going for an easy laugh.

Other works purporting to present the folklore of the region have appeared in print—Glimm mentions Elfriede Ruppert's *A Historical and Folklore Tour of the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon* (1964) and Robert Lyman's *Forbidden Land* (1971) and *Amazing Indeed* (1973)—but they have generally come from nonoral sources or have been retellings of oral materials in literary style. *Flatlanders and Ridgerunners* wins over such books simply because in it we see for the first time field-collected texts from this geographic area. In Glimm's own words, the book is "an attempt to present the oral folklore of the region as it is really spoken . . . [and] to play the people of the region back to themselves so they can hear their own voices" (p. xxii). *Flatlanders and Ridgerunners* will probably be a regional best seller for that very reason: informants will want to read their own stories,

neighbors will want to read about the towns, creeks, and local settings where the action of the stories takes place.

It stands to reason that *Flatlanders and Ridgerunners* will also be used as a folklore textbook at Mansfield State for many years. Students from the area will find the book helpful for identifying which parts of their own experience count as folklore, whereas students coming into Mansfield from elsewhere will get a quick introduction to the folk culture of Pennsylvania's mountains. The book answers some questions about the difference between urban lore and rural lore (if we needed those answers once more), but leaves untouched some questions we have just begun to ask: What makes a region? Is Appalachian folk culture similar all along the mountain chain? Do the mountains make the region or is it some other factor, like ethnic stock of the initial settlers, era of settlement, or mode of livelihood?

The people whose stories appear in *Flatlanders and Ridgerunners: Folktales from the Mountains of Northern Pennsylvania* seem pretty much like any other people who tell tales: aware of their place in their society, puzzled by the inexplicable events in their lives, concerned for the welfare of themselves, their family, and their neighbor, and able to turn their anxiety into thoughtful or humorous commentary through their narratives. Any differences which they may have as Pennsylvanians or as residents of the northern Appalachian region, however, are not pointed out. Because of his work collecting oral lore for this book and because of his position teaching at Mansfield State, James Glimm is in the perfect position to find out whether such differences do exist and, if they do, what they are. In *Flatlanders and Ridgerunners* we do hear the voices of the people of the region, but, without scholarly interpretation of more depth, we outsiders cannot understand what these voices are saying. Let us hope Glimm takes on that task in a second book.

This latest (in two senses of the word) issue of the *North Carolina Folklore Journal* is the first number of our 1984 subscription year. The second 1984 issue (32:2 Fall-Winter 1984) is being typeset and will be published as soon as possible.

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CONTENTS

1984 Brown-Hudson Awards.....47

Lillie Lee and Jennie Burnett: Afro-American Quilters,
Mary Anne McDonald.....47

Mrs. Emma Dupree: “That Little Medicine Thing”
Karen Baldwin.....50

F. Borden Mace,
Cratis Williams.....54

“So Simple Yet So Complicated:
Folk Artist William Young of Pantego
Elizabeth A. Fenn.....56

The Historical Events Behind the Celebrated
Ballad “Naomi Wise”
Robert Roote.....70

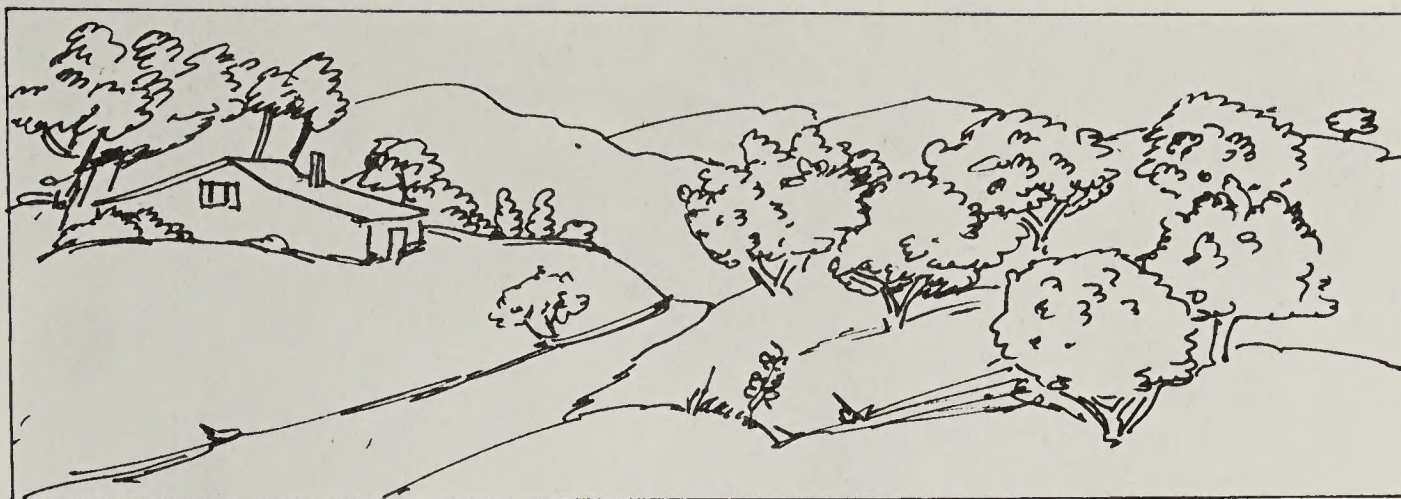
Orphan Character Notes in Appalachia,
Junius Allison.....82

Illustrations, *Norma Farthing Murphy*

Cover: Quiltmaker Lillie Lee with a great-granddaughter, Chatham County, N.C., 1984. Photograph by Mary Anne McDonald.



Jennie Burnett working on a quilt in her Chatham County home, November 1984. Photograph by Mary Anne McDonald.



1984 Brown-Hudson Awards

Lillie Lee and Jennie Burnett: Afro-American Quiltmakers

Looking back at the list of the recipients of the Brown-Hudson Award one finds that the majority of them have been men. I think that is noteworthy, and I think that there are many different reasons for it. One of these may be that many of the ways that women traditionally express themselves take the form of things that get *worn out*. Traditionally, women work in the home. They cook meals—which get eaten. They make clothes—which get used up. Some women make quilts—that also get worn out. Sometimes it's easy to overlook women's achievements because they don't stay around for long.

Of all these products of women's hands, surely more quilts survive than handmade workshirts or bars of lye soap. But so often the quilts that survive, survive because they aren't used. The quilts we see on exhibit in museums are the fancy quilts, the Sunday quilts, the special ones made for show. Sometimes, after looking at quilt books or exhibits, we may get the idea that all the quilts ever made were meticulous, neat, and always clean. But most of the quilts our grandmothers and great-grandmothers made have long ago been worn out and discarded; they were given away, used as rags, or put inside new quilts. In fact, most quilts were made to be used, to keep people warm—not just saved for a special day.

Jennie Burnett and Lillie Lee make quilts to be used. They learned to quilt from family members, and they have made quilts all of their lives for their families, friends, and needy people in their community. Afro-American quilts are different in some ways from the Anglo-American quilts that many of us here are perhaps more familiar with. Briefly, some of the characteristics of Afro-American quilts are dominance of strips, bright, highly contrasting colors, large blocks or squares, off-set designs, and the improvisational use of designs.¹



Jennie Burnett before one of her quilts, Chatham County, November 1984.
Photograph by Mary Anne McDonald.

Lillie Lee and Jennie Burnett were both born over 80 years ago in northern Chatham County not far away from the road where they both now live. Jennie Burnett's father was a tenant farmer, and she was raised doing heavy farm work. She has been an avid quilter since she was a child. She says: "Whenever I could beat my parents from the field to the house, I'd sew for that little length of time, [the] dinner hour."² After she married she continued to farm and to quilt, and she and her husband bought a farm of their own. She stopped farming in 1967 after her husband died, and since then has devoted more time to quilting. She is recognized in the community as an outstanding quiltmaker and has won many ribbons from the Chatham County Fair. For Mrs. Burnett quilting is very much a salvage art, born of necessity. She is *very* resourceful. She has used everything from neckties to old dresses, to flour sacks, to curtains in her quilts. She says: "You see, we couldn't go out and get what we wanted. We had to use what we had. Just use what you got."³

Lillie Lee also grew up in a tenant farmer family. She has sewn since she was a child when she made clothing for the family. Her step-mother taught her to quilt when she was a teenager. After she married, she moved to Chapel Hill where her husband worked as a waiter and she worked as a housekeeper—for Paul Green among others. She and her husband raised three children. She lived for several years in High Point and in Greensboro but returned to Chatham to stay in 1934. Mrs. Lee is very active in community affairs and in 1983 received the Governor's Community Volunteer award. She quilts, crochets, and makes stuffed animals in her



Lillie Lee with one of her quilts, Chatham County, 1984. Photograph by Mary Anne McDonald.

spare time. Her thoughts on putting a quilt together show that for her the quilt is primarily to be used for warmth. She says: "When I put them together I'm just trying to get through with it. My only reason for making a quilt was just because I needed some cover. Whether the[squares] matched or didn't match, they still measured out to the same thing when you got ready to quilt it."⁴

Both Mrs. Lee's and Mrs. Burnett's quilts are more than just warm covers—they are bright, inventive, and beautiful. Both these women have generously shared their time with me to tell me not only about quilting, but about their lives. In June 1984 they demonstrated Afro-American quilt-making at the British-American Festival in Durham. It is fitting that the North Carolina Folklore Society is honoring them today for the skill and art they express in a once necessary household craft: quiltmaking.

—Mary Anne McDonald
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

NOTES

1. Maude S. Wahlman enumerates the first four of these characteristics in her essay "The Aesthetics of Afro-American Quilts" in Roland L. Freeman, *Something To Keep You Warm* (Jackson, Mississippi: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1981), pp. 6-8.
2. Jennie Burnett, Pittsboro, N.C., interview, 14 December 1982.
3. Jennie Burnett, interview.
4. Lillie Lee, Pittsboro, N.C., interview, 13 November 1984.

Mrs. Emma Dupree: "That Little Medicine Thing"

When Mrs. Emma Dupree was born on July 4, eighty-seven years ago, by her own account there was a set of traditional signs from which her parents and others in her community of family and neighbors could measure difference.

When I was born, I was the seventh one, the seventh sister. And they say the seventh one will be over-endowed in everything. Well, I was the seventh child. When I was born I was born way back in the hard times—way back. We had no lights, but we had a little bit in a lamp. And my daddy went for the doctor, and that was called a midwife and some call her a grannylady. He went and got his mule and cart and went to get the midwife. Meanwhile all of the oil from the lantern burnt out. And he hadn't gotten back by the time the oil burnt out. And my mother was in the dark. When he got back it had got day just like early in the morning. They had a glow—the yard, leaves, and the house glowed—and that light stayed until 10 in the day, and it was brighter than the sun when I was born. [My mother] says that's why I was so different. I was a different child. People talked and I listened and my heart was big enough to hold all that. I talked different...was strong in my talking...I was just born to that.¹

What Mrs. Dupree was just born to was a tradition of knowing about the curative and preventative uses of the natural pharmacopea which grew wild along the banks of the creeks and branches and the Tar River in her home area of Falkland in Pitt County. In her childhood, she says, "I got to ramblin' that woods...got to makin' the woods my own," and gathering the leaves and stems and seeds of the plants she found there in the sack she always took along. Her interest in the healing, helping effects of the plants was established early, as well as her sense of place and community in Falkland.

The woods gal, that's what they called me. They'd say, here come's that little medicine thing.

I always did it. There wan't nobody sick nowhere around me, around Falkland, white or colored, but that I wouldn't be there. Over a mile from the river there was a big field called "lower ground." That's where I lived and gathered herbs. I was raised in Falkland. Now up here where I live [in Fountain], out here in these woods, I can find some and know some [herbs], but not like where I moved from, 'cause they grow near water. Down around the Tar River, you know, down in Falkland and right on into Little Washington, you can find herbs....

In Fountain, where she has lived for the past forty years, she serves her community of neighbors primarily with the plants she keeps in the small gardens surrounding her house on South Jefferson St. In the gardens along one side of the house are sage and three varieties of mint; out along the front of her porch grow tansy and rabbit tobacco along with her flowers; in the garden strips between her house and her daughter Doris' house, there



Emma Dupree and a granddaughter at the N.C. Folklore Society meeting, November 1984. Photograph by Mary Anne McDonald.

are blooming cacti, horseradish, mullein, and maypop; and in several places through the back yards are flourishing, tall transplantings of Mrs. Dupree's healing berry tree.

When Mrs. Dupree talks about the healing "power" of the berry tree she also makes clear that she attributes her herbalist talents and knowledge of tradition to the Lord: "Now that tree, I don't know of another name for it, but it's in the old-fashioned Bible...and the seed for it came from Rome. It's a healing tree. And I don't talk about this unless I'm talking to Him."

Her fundamental belief in the power of Christ to invest all parts of a "medicine plant" with healing properties is mirrored in the way she talks about the effects of the tonics and teas she prepares from the plants.

"Don't you know that whatever goes inside you goes all over you? It searches you." Her herbal tradition involves making use of the whole plant—"the leaves of the tree, the root, the bark...the power is in that, same as it is in the berries"—for treating the whole person. For Mrs. Dupree has an interest in the total nutrition and wellness of the people she helps. She understands that many of the problems of disease her patients have derived from foods and water that have been poisoned with additives and by improper preservation and preparation. "We are eating and drinking our diseases," she explains, and her herb tonics "search" all the body systems for curative effect. "It goes in the blood and the marrow and even in your bones. It helps. It works."

Since she was a child in Falkland and in the forty years she has lived in Fountain, Mrs. Dupree has home-prepared her teas and special "nine herb" tonic, packaged them in pickle and mayonnaise jars her patients bring her, and dispensed them with instructions for their use, all in the service of her faith in the healing power of the Lord. She is always grateful for contributions of ingredients she needs for the preparations—honey, molasses, brown sugar, rock candy, horehound, lemons, vinegar, mineral water—but she does not exchange her help for money. And, while the herbs she grows are always in stages of drying and preparation for use, and her larder is always ready for requests for her tonics, she does not label her preparations with instructions for their use. Hers is a very personal, individualized and direct method of transmitting information to her patients. Others whom she has taught to make preparations use labels for their identification, but, "I give the label with my mouth," she explains.

It was the close relationship she maintains with her patients along with her expertise in herbal cures which first brought Mrs. Dupree to the attention of researchers associated with the East Carolina University School of Medicine as well as other physicians in and out of state. In 1979, Walter Shepherd, of the School of Medicine, and his colleague in medical anthropology, the late James Young, capped their research on Mrs. Dupree's work with the production of "Little Medicine Thing," a videotape portrait of Mrs. Dupree, intended for the instruction of medical students. Shepherd and Young documented Mrs. Dupree's herbal knowledge, her philosophy of health and healing, and her personal history of service both as nurse/assistant to a physician in the community and as an independent healer, recognized by her neighbors as an alternative source for medical assistance.

I first knew of Mrs. Dupree and her work from seeing that film and each time I show the tape to my American Folklore students I watch and listen with renewed interest in and appreciation for the images of wholeness and wellness she speaks with.

Emma Dupree sees and speaks of likeness between the growth patterns of the plants she uses and the conformation of the human body. She displayed the leaves and stem of a maypop against the palm of her hand and said, "See, that looks near about like a man's hand." She hoe chopped the root from the leaves of a freshly dug sweet flag plant, held it up by its "arms" and said, "That grows near about like a man does. See how that grows?" And, indeed, we can see there is a torso, head, arms, and a dangle of legs in the root she uses to make a healing tea for kidney and liver disorders.

It is my estimation that some of the power, the gift for "healing hands" Mrs. Dupree understands herself to have from the Lord, is expressed quite unselfconsciously in the "labels" she gives with her mouth. Her patients

and others who come to her to listen and learn are given specific instructions in the preparation and use of her healing “yerbs,” within a larger framework of her understanding of the interrelationship among man and other living things, the coherence there is in the natural world.

Mrs. Dupree generously has shared her herbal knowledge and healing practices with the wider community of students and scholars in medicine, anthropology, and folklore as well as with those in her community who depend on her personalized advice and treatments. Therefore, it is in recognition of and appreciation for her life-long practice of traditional herbal healing knowledge that the North Carolina Folklore Society presents a Brown-Hudson Award to Mrs. Emma Dupree of Falkland and Fountain, North Carolina.

—Karen Baldwin, Director,
East Carolina University Folklore Archive

NOTES

1. Mrs. Dupree's words are quoted from three sources: a paper for my American Folklore course by Melanie Bentley, “Folk Medical Practice and Beliefs of Mrs. Emma Dupree,” deposited with the ECU Folklore Archive; the videotape “Little Medicine Thing: Mrs. Emma Dupree,” produced by Walter Shepherd, Office of Health Services Research and Development, The East Carolina University School of Medicine, James C. Young, consultant; and from my own conversations with Mrs. Dupree. Melanie Bentley-Maughan, now married and a graduate student in the UNC-CH Folklore Curriculum, continues her research and friendship with Mrs. Dupree. Walter Shepherd's research with Mrs. Dupree will be included in a collection of essays on traditional medicine in North Carolina being edited by Karen Baldwin and James Kirkland.

F. Borden Mace

While growing up by the sea at Beaufort, North Carolina, Borden Mace spoke the English for which that area is noted. At school he learned standard English well, but he felt very much at home while studying Chaucer at the University of North Carolina. As the assistant in charge of the Bureau of Visual Instruction at the University, he delivered personally films to be shown in schools across the state. While traveling about he became interested in the folk speech and the rich lore of the common people.

After a distinguished career in mostly educational film production, which took him all over the world, and brought him success as a businessman, Borden retired at an early age, but he was lured back from retirement to become in 1973 the first executive director of the Appalachian Consortium with headquarters on the campus of Appalachian State University at Boone. While directing the Consortium he established and managed the Appalachian Consortium Press, which brought out 26 publications about Appalachia during his six years with the Consortium.

In his travels in Appalachia he became acquainted with the folk speech of the region, noting that, like the speech of coastal Carolina, it possessed a Middle English flavor. The lore and folkways of the people of Appalachia fascinated him. After discovering that no recent history of Western North Carolina had been published, he set about to publish one in two volumes. He read a massive three-volume dissertation on the interpretation of Appalachians in literature and had it abridged and published, first in the *Appalachian Journal* and then as a book. He met local historian Paul Fink from Jonesboro, Tennessee, and helped to publish his collection of mountain speech and idiom in *Bits of Mountain Speech*.

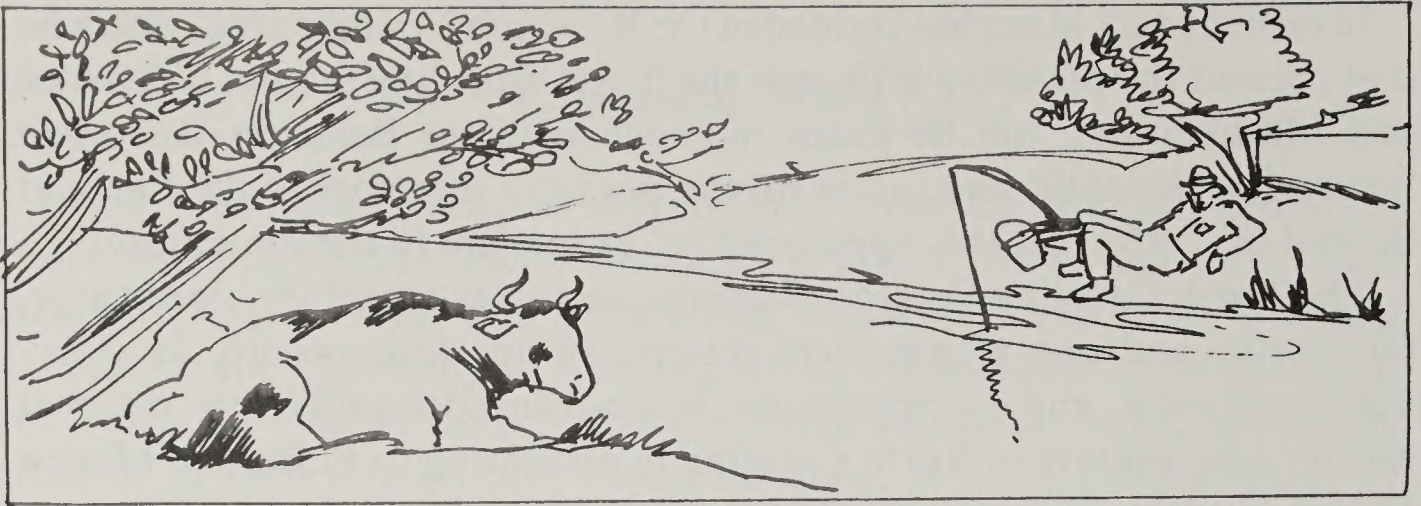
He supported Dr. Max Dixon's writing of *The Wataugans*, about those overmountain men who established the Watauga Settlements, the very first free and independent community in America, and marched 120 miles over the mountains later to defeat the British at the Battle of Kings Mountain, which Thomas Jefferson called the decisive battle of the Revolutionary War. He helped to establish the Overmountain Victory Trail

The Appalachian Consortium Press helped with the publication of *Voices from the Hills*, a widely used anthology of Appalachian literature, and *A Bibliography of Appalachia*, a monolithic achievement, but it was Borden Mace himself who recruited folklorist and English teacher Rogers Whitener to begin a weekly column on Appalachian folkways, a popular column that continues to appear in the newspapers throughout the region.

In recent years Mace has resided in the Research Triangle area, where he is at present the planning officer of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, but he keeps in touch with the Beaufort Historical Society on the coast and serves on the board of directors of the Penland School of Crafts and the Appalachian Consortium in the mountains.

The North Carolina Folklore Society recognizes a producer, innovator, facilitator, and one whose great interest in our folk culture, its story, documentation, and interpretation, has advanced significantly regional history and folklore in North Carolina in presenting to F. Borden Mace a Brown-Hudson Folklore Award for 1984.

—*Cratis Williams*
Appalachian State University



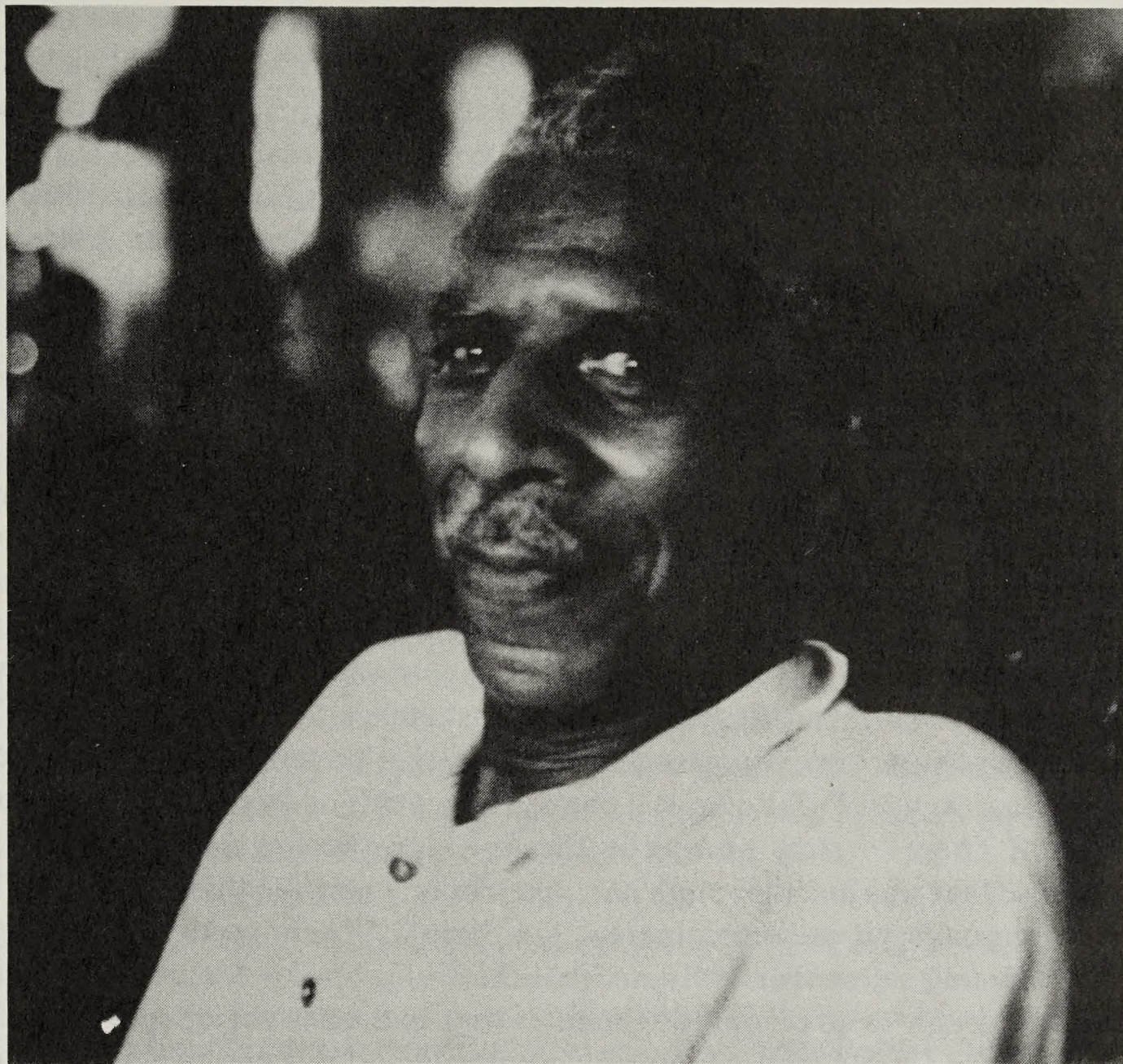
**“So Simple Yet So Complicated”:
Folk Artist William Young of Pantego**

by Elizabeth A. Fenn

In the work of William E. Young of Pantego, North Carolina, Afro-American art has come full circle. Having steeped himself in the black cultures of the Caribbean and the eastern seaboard states, Young has turned directly to the source—Africa—for the inspiration of much of his work. Today he works in a variety of media, including cement, watercolors, and oil paints. But most of his energy is devoted to wood sculpture, and it is here that Africa is most clearly visible in Young's work.

William Young's artistic odyssey began in Portsmouth, Virginia, where he was born in 1912 or 1913. He recalls vividly his early love for drawing and painting: “I started watercolors and things in school, from grammar school, kindergarten, on up through elementary school, on up through junior high school.”¹ An art teacher visited the school once a week. “I always looked forward to that day,” Young remembers, “because I'd know that was a day that I'd enjoy, because she would always have something new for us to do. She'd show you the rudiments of painting—how to start and all that.”

Young's other childhood memories are vivid as well. His maternal grandfather, a tall, strong man who was one-quarter Cherokee, was the official lamp-lighter in the town of Enfield, North Carolina. Young also remembers his paternal grandmother, who hailed from Hendersonville. She “was a young girl when slavery was abolished,” Young explains. “She used to set me on her lap and tell me about when she was coming up as a young girl....She could remember it well. Her mind was very brilliant. She told me everything about slavery.”



Folk artist William Young at home, Pantego, N.C., 1984. Photograph by Elizabeth Fenn.

There can be little doubt that William Young's mind absorbed everything she told him. Even as a boy, he had a voracious appetite for knowledge of all kinds. When he was twelve he started working at a local grocery in order to have more money to buy books. When he had saved enough, he remembers, "I'd go across the river on the ferry to Norfolk and I'd get me a nice book." His friends and neighbors did not always understand his spending habits. "Why are you throwing away six dollars on that book?" they would ask. "You could buy so much to eat with that." And Young would retort, "Look now, you feed your stomach and I'm going to feed my brain. If I feel like I want to feed my brain, I'm going to do it. I enjoy it." Today, the cumulative effects of William Young's lifelong quest for knowledge are readily apparent. He discourses freely on topics ranging from the Haitian Revolution to Columbus's relationship with Queen Isabel of Spain.

In his mid-teens William Young moved to New York City. But before long he was back in Portsmouth, where he joined the Coast Guard while

still a teenager. There he stayed for three or four years, working as a cook in the officer's mess of a large, sea-going vessel. "That's where I first picked up on cooking," Young recalls. "There was a black chef on there, and he used to give me every little knowledge of cooking he could." Cooking for officers was no easy task. "You know how officers eat," he explains; "they eat high off the hog." Even food service was an art for William Young. "You see," Young says, "there's an art to setting a table. A lot of people don't know how to set a table. You see these waiters who think they can just go around and just put knives and forks like this, but that's an art." Indeed, for William Young, it was. He went on to work for years as a cook in New York.

Young's tour of duty with the Coast Guard was important for other reasons as well. It brought him face-to-face with the vital Afro-American cultures of the Caribbean. The ship's steward, for example, was from Trinidad. Like Young, he was an artist. "We would sit down after the seas was calm, sit down on the afterdeck. Now the steward, he used to do all this pencil work. I'd get my little easel, my little sketches, and I'd be sketching." Time was short, and Young could rarely finish a sketch in one sitting. He often had to wait "till I'd have a chance to get off, or have a little time to myself. Then I'd start putting in the finishing touches and the details, because that was just the rough part, sketching. I just like things like that." He even engaged in some amateur taxidermy. "There used to be flying fish," Young remembers. "Sometimes they'd fly on the deck, and I'd get lucky enough to grab one of them. I even had one—of course I'm no taxidermist—but I mounted one. I never thought it was going to last, but it lasted. I put it on a frame—a flying fish."

Not all of Young's time in the Coast Guard was spent on shipboard. The vessel on which he worked cruised the U.S. coast from Virginia to the Gulf of Mexico. But these are not the areas that made the deepest impression on him. "Sometimes," Young remembers, "we'd make these trips to the Caribbean." The ship touched on numerous Caribbean islands, and the young seaman went ashore whenever he could, captivated by everything he saw and experienced. He spent more time on Jamaica than any other island, and it left a lasting mark in his memory. "I'll tell you I saw a lot of things there," Young says. "I bought a lot of little artifacts. Of course, through the years I have just lost a lot of things."

It was in Jamaica, as he walked the streets and watched black craftsmen at their work, that William Young first began to think about doing sculpture of his own. He remembers it vividly:

Of course you know I was fascinated. See, that's what give me the idea for doing some of this stuff. 'Cause I saw the natives—people setting under a little lean-to or a little something—and they got all their work before them, pieces of wood,

you know. And I'm quizzical and I ask them, "What kind of wood you got there? What you doing with that wood?" I said, "That wood you've got there—what are you building? What are you making that thing out of?" They were carving these wood heads and things like that, you know—full statues.

These were the artisans who sparked what William Young calls "my little feeling that I wanted to do it." But like Langston Hughes's "Dream Deferred," William Young's "little feeling" would smolder for forty years before exploding.

Meanwhile, Young continued learning all he could about the cultures of the Caribbean. In Jamaica he saw the Rastafarians and heard of "a group in some parts of Jamaica that lived to theirself. They were called...bush people." The bush people, Young explains, "were supposed to be transported there to put them on these plantations there to work." But the slaves managed to escape "off a ship, and they never could find them....they hid in all that bushy stuff. The people never know where they was at. They thought they was drowned in suckholes or sandholes or they had been eat up, but they wasn't. They survived. And they multiplied and they are there today, but they stay to theirself."² William Young also remembers going ashore on the island of Bimini and seeing the coast of Haiti. Although his ship never landed at Haiti, Young learned of the island from his brother, who was also a seaman:

He had been to Haiti so many times. He told me so many things about the country that got me wanting to go there. He said, "Bill, if you go there, some parts, you'd think you were really in Africa, because the people act just like it." See they have their customs like in Africa you know—all kinds of fetishism and religions and all that kind of stuff. That's where they got all those religious groups they call voodoo—which is a religion. It *is* a religion. They transported it with them and it come over here to that little country.³

Young's interest in Haiti continues today, and he is sharply critical of the current dictatorial government run by "Baby Doc" Duvalier, self-proclaimed president-for-life. "If they didn't have all them bunch of racketeers and bunch of things they call rulers," he says, "they would have been on top of the world."⁴

When he got out of the Coast Guard Young returned to New York City, where he took up residence in Brooklyn. There, while earning his living as a cook, he continued sketching and painting. He mingled with artists in Greenwich Village and visited the city's art museums until he became familiar with the great painters of the West. "I can see different artists' work," he says, "and I don't have to see the signatures. I know who they are. Modigliani is a guy that always feature women in long necks. And there's another guy, he's strictly for perspectives. This guy, he do street scenes and perspectives." Young himself also painted perspectives, and he studied such works closely: "like you see, a street scene all the way down to



Painting by William Young. Photograph by Elizabeth Fenn.

infinity. And then they come way out and the buildings [Young trails off].... You know, I even bought books on that so I could really study that because I like perspectives." New York teemed with artistic life, and Young immersed himself in it.

Yet it was not the great western painters who sustained his aspirations to sculpture. "When I lived in New York," Young explains, "I just haunted the galleries that displayed African art."⁵ As he saw more and more African art, his already intense desire to do sculpture became even stronger. "I saw this black African art there at the museum in New York. It was the first time I got that real inspiration for doing all that stuff over there [he gestures toward his sculptures] is when I went there." Something



Street scene painted by William Young. Photograph by Elizabeth Fenn.

in African sculpture struck a chord deep within William Young. It is a feeling he finds hard to describe. "It would take me a month or more to explain my fascination for African art," he wrote in a letter. "[In the] first place it is so different, it is primitive, and the details are so simple yet so complicated."⁶ Furthermore, Young explains, "it related to my people, too, in Africa."

It was only when he moved to North Carolina in 1973 that Young was at last able to take up sculpture himself. Settling with his wife in the rural fishing town of Pantego, Young now found that he had plenty of time, space, and supplies to pursue his craft. "I'd love to have done it in New York," he says, "but it's not convenient to do it in New York like here—you got so much in the streets down there. Down here you can do anything. The weather's nice and you can work outside, and you got a lot of stuff to work with." His home, a trailer that he covered with brick to cut the harsh winter wind that sweeps across the Pamlico Sound, is filled with the elegant wooden forms he has carved in the last eleven years. By his own account, when he finally found himself free to do sculpture, he "really took onto it good."

The move to North Carolina gave William Young the freedom to do art work in other media as well. For a while he experimented with metalworking, making rings and bracelets out of copper tubing and scrap metal. He

describes his method as follows: "I got a old piece of iron out there that's got a lot of old rough wrinkles in it, so I take this smooth hammer and I knock it on that old rough iron and I flatten it out to a certain flatness, and I make bracelets and all that. See all that work it goes in there when you knock it with that; that goes inside the design. You see the hammer blows." Young gave away most of the metal items he made. He does not know if or when he will go back to metalworking again. "See, I got out of that little spell and I ain't made no more. But I got some copper out there. Sometime if I get that spell again I might go out there and bang out a few more you know."

More recently, Young has entered another "spell" and has begun working in cement, making bowls which he then paints with his own designs. His method is unique. He finds a bowl slightly smaller than the bowl he is going to make and covers the outside with paper towels. Then he molds the cement over the towels and waits for the piece to dry. Once the bowl is dry, he uses his painting talents to decorate it with glossy enamel. He tried it, he says, simply because he was wondering if it would work.

Still, William Young puts most of his artistic energy into sculpture. He gets his materials from local sources and has tried working with many of the different kinds of wood available in North Carolina: "See, you got so much supply bases to work on—trees down here. There's a wealth of trees—cherry, oak, fruit wood, walnut, maple. You got so many different things." Pecan is his favorite wood, and Young has used wood from a pecan tree growing in his own yard. "Now, we got a big ol' pecan tree out there," he says. "We had some of the branches cut and I used some of that to make some of those statuettes." Other wood is supplied by family members. One of his wife's nephews brought him "a lot of that black walnut wood." Another nephew cut down some cypress and gave a large supply of it to Young, already cut into small pieces. He sets the wood on the back porch to age, and then, he says, "when I feel like I'm getting the urge to do something, I go over there and strip the bark off that and start on that."

Young's tools are the common ones that would be found in any well-stocked workshop. "I don't have no...what you'd say are really artist's tools or sculptor's tools," he says. He scorns the array of expensive tools displayed in a hobby book he once bought. "I found that the things I was doing it with were just as simple and as easy to do as that stuff. And you don't have to put out all that kind of money." Young uses his own "makeshift tools." With the exception of one concave chisel, all of his chisels "are just average everyday chisels." He also bought a small metal scraper. "It help me to smooth the wood down," he says. Finally, he utilizes different kinds of sandpaper in the last stages of a sculpture, before applying the finish.

Young likes to keep his woodworking tools simple because he believes this keeps his sculpture closer to its African and Afro-Caribbean inspiration. "Cause see," he says, "they don't have no tools either. They have just simple things. Some of them use hard pieces of stone and stuff to cleave all that stuff out with." Young was particularly impressed by the tools used by one artist he saw in Jamaica. The man, according to Young, shaped his wooden sculptures with a piece of stone:

I saw one of them guys in Jamaica. He had scraped this piece of stone around so it [the wood] had a concave shape to it and he was scrubbing that out and getting the neck all out in there [Young gestures to his neck], all in here. And so I mean, who would have thought of that? I mean he thought of that. He didn't have no money and he just had what he had, so he had to make do with simple things, you know? Simple ways.

Although William Young does not use stone to shape his own wood sculptures, he also "makes do" with simple things.

Each of Young's sculptures is the result of many hours of labor. "I didn't do no quick work on them," he explains. His art work depends on his schedule. "You know I'd start on them, and maybe I might do something one day and the next day I'm busy doing something else and I can't get around to it, so maybe two or three days pass before I start working on it again." He estimates that on the average, each sculpture takes one month to complete, "because you know it takes more than just shaping it up and putting it up in that shape.... It takes a little time."

By his own description, Young's work comes in "spells" corresponding to "urges" and "feelings." He works in one medium for a period and then switches to another. If the mood (or "spell") strikes him again, he will return to a medium he has worked in before. Oil painting and wood sculpture seem to be the two forms to which Young has applied himself most consistently. The subject matter he chooses goes through similar phases. At one time, he recalls, "I had something going on about waves and seas and pounding rocks and all that. I just felt I wanted to do it [paint it]." At other times he has found himself drawn to very different subjects. Young realizes that most artists go through such phases. "See," he says, "you take a person who will be artistic leaning—they don't do everything the same way. Let me take Picasso. For years and years he was on that blue scene. Years later he was on that cubistic scene. Then he went to realism. They go through everything." Young might as well have been describing himself, for his own work likewise reflects experimentation and change.

Young describes most of his sculpture as "purely African," and it is clear that his years of fascination with African art have had their effect. Even where the precise cultural influence cannot be determined, William Young's sculptures almost always *feel* African. When asked about his preferences among his own sculptures, Young explained that the pieces he



Wood sculpture by William Young. Photograph by Elizabeth Fenn.

liked best “are more like that primitive African style....the primitiver they are, the more I seem to like them, because I like to get into the primitive aspect of the thing.” Like much West African sculpture, most of Young’s work is highly stylized. In fact, this seems to be what Young is referring to when he calls his sculpture “primitive.” “I like to get right down into the primitive,” he says. “That’s what you call something that is not all full of details and all full of this and that. It’s a primitive thing. It’s the way I would visualize they would do it. That’s the way I do it, like that. I don’t go into all this aesthetic type of stuff.”

Young’s well-developed sense of style (or primitivism, to use his own phrase) results in figures that are ageless, frozen in a timeless void. In fact, scholar Robert Farris Thompson lists “ephebism, or youthfulness,” as the first “canon” of African sculpture. No matter how old the subject may be in actuality, its sculptural representation is usually one of highly stylized perfection. Young’s sculpture too bears no sign of age. But like that of West Africa, it is inevitably strong.⁷

Surface characteristics also indicate that the African art in New York’s galleries and museums was not lost on William Young. His works are always glossy and silky smooth. As he himself explained, “You got to smooth it down, throw a few finishes on it, and get it to the complexion you want.” On many of his sculptures Young achieved the desired luminescent quality by applying a protective varnish or clear paint. On others he used wax. “If you’re not going to put shield finish [on it],” he explained, “then you might want to wax it. So you’re going to wax it and keep rubbing it, you know.” Holding one of his recent works in his hands, Young described how he had diligently rubbed wax into its glossy surface: “See how that’s polished there?” Such smooth, shiny textures have an aesthetic appeal that is virtually universal in West Africa and continues to prevail today in Afro-America.

Young’s work shares other surface characteristics with African sculpture as well. Most of his figures are either painted or stained, and his color schemes, like those of West Africa, are strong, uncluttered, and direct. Monochromal and high-contrast bichromal patterns appear frequently, and the colors red and black, so prominent in West African work, also stand out in Young’s sculptures. The same confident juxtaposition of strong colors can be seen in his paintings.

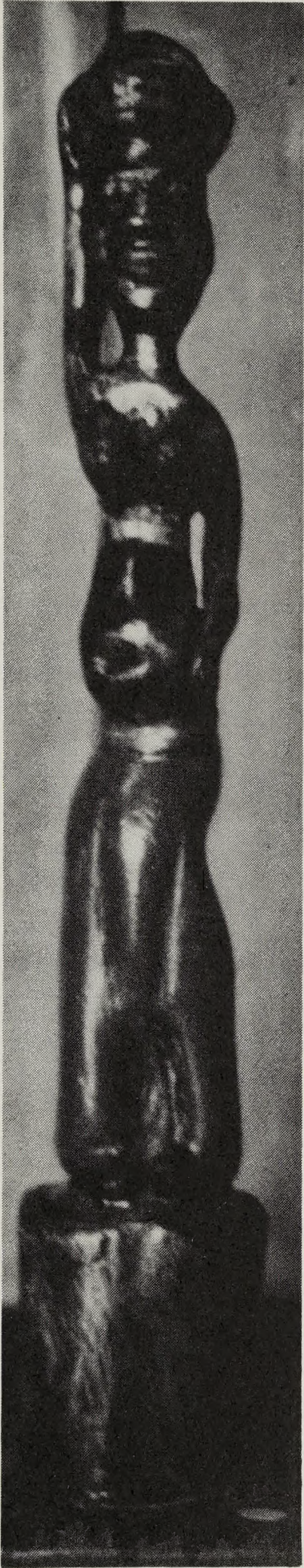
In subject matter as well Young’s work clearly reveals the influence of Africa and the Caribbean. One of Young’s sculptures, a half-coiled snake designed to serve as a pipe-holder, is classically West African in its theme. Reptiles, including snakes and serpents, play an important part in a variety of West African religions and artistic traditions. The Fon of the Republic of Benin (formerly Dahomey) incorporate images of Dan, the beneficent serpent of the heavens, into their charms and art work. The nearby Yoruba

frequently use images of reptiles in representations of the war-god Ogun and the thunder-god Shango. Shango, furthermore, was a king as well as a god, and the Yoruba commonly reinterpret the royal leopard as a beautifully patterned reptile. Such animals have a very different meaning among the Kongo and many of their descendants in the Americas who sometimes attribute trouble and sickness to the influence of snakes and reptiles from the spirit world.⁸

African roots are visible in Young's other subjects as well. One of his works portrays a woman carrying a basket on her head. Another is a stylized rendition of a sitting woman with a child on her back. Variations of the latter image can be found among the art works of cultures throughout West Africa, where children are usually carried on the back just as loads are usually carried on the head.

William Young claims to have no favorite style or regional tradition in African art. He liked all of the African sculpture that he saw while living in New York, and he took most of his inspiration from it. His move to North Carolina in 1973 was thus a mixed blessing. While it gave Young the freedom to pursue sculpture on his own, it also separated him from the galleries of African art that had come to mean so much to him. Today he relies largely on the *National Geographic* for his images of Africa. In most cases, therefore, William Young seems to compose his sculptures by applying his own formidable creativity to his recollections of the African works he saw in New York. The result is a version of African art that is uniquely his own. Young often combines the salient features of a variety of West African traditions in one sculpture, and he frequently gives new interpretations to classical African forms.

For example the almond-shaped eyes of many of Young's subjects are clearly reminiscent of Yoruba sculpture and the works of ancient Benin. Most of Young's sculptures have the "cool" faces—utterly devoid of emotion—that also characterize Yoruba art. A striking kneeling figure, also with almond-shaped eyes, wears neck rings that recall two different artistic traditions: the elegant sculptures used by Mende women's societies in Sierra Leone and the bronze images of kings from Benin, both of which wear prominent neck rings. One of the more common features of William Young's sculptures is an enlarged or distended abdomen. This may be a reinterpretation of the Kongo focus on the navel as a seat of mystic power and vision. Figures throughout the Kongo-influenced regions of Zaire, Congo-Brazzaville, Angola, Cabinda, and Gabon are notable for their exaggerated navels, thrust forward with the hands alongside. In one of Young's sculptures the mystical Kongo navel is transformed into the proud, swollen belly of a pregnant woman, with the hands once again placed alongside.⁹



Wood sculptures by William Young. Photograph by Elizabeth Fenn.

The work of William Young is deliberately and self-consciously African in its inspiration. Through his experiences in the Caribbean and the U. S. South, and through considerable knowledge of world history, Young became acutely aware of his own roots in the motherland. His desire to do sculpture, as he says, "related to my people...in Africa." It is an intensely personal desire, a calling, which comes from deep within. Yet for all his fascination with Africa, Young remains a cultural relativist. "I'm not what you'd say a racist, or bigot, or separatist. I'm a person that believes in all people and likes them. Of course everybody have a little pride in their own people; they want to find out where they sprung from." William Young has certainly found out where he "sprung from."

NOTES

1. Except where otherwise indicated, all quotations are taken from William E. Young, interview with the author, Pantego, North Carolina, August 9, 1984.

2. The maroons, also called bush people or bush negroes, were bands of escaped slaves who lived in the mountainous Jamaican backcountry. Jamaica had what one historian has called "the most outstanding maroons within the British West Indies." Such groups first appeared in 1655 when the English attack and takeover of the island gave Spanish slaves the opportunity to abscond to the bush. The centuries that followed were marked by intermittent periods of war and peace between various maroon groups and the English. As Young points out, their descendants remain quite autonomous to this day. See Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca, New York, 1982), p. 61, chaps. 5, 6, and 7; and Orlando Patterson, "Slavery and Slave Revolts: A Sociohistorical Analysis of the First Maroon War, 1665-1740," in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, ed. Richard Price (1973; 2nd ed. Baltimore, 1979), pp. 246-92.

3. Haitian *vodun*, known more popularly as “voodoo,” is an extraordinary blend of African and European (specifically Catholic) religious traditions. It derives its name from Dahomean *vodun*, but it incorporates elements of other West African religions as well. *Vodun* is usually divided into two spheres. The *rada*, or cool and benevolent side of *vodun*, is primarily Dahomean in origin. The *petro*, or hot side of *vodun*, is primarily Kongo in origin, although the more violent Dahomean gods also fall into this category. The best sources on Haitian *vodun* are: Maya Deren, *Divine Horsemen* (New York, 1953); Alfred Metraux, *Voodoo in Haiti* (1959; rpt. New York, 1972); and Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York, 1983), chap. 3.

4. Jean Claude (“Baby Doc”) Duvalier, born in 1951, succeeded his father Francois (“Papa Doc”) Duvalier as head of the Haitian government on April 22, 1971. The elder Duvalier, who had also been “president-for-life,” was widely known for his undemocratic, dictatorial rule. Although the beginning of his son’s reign seemed to hold out some promise of liberalization, it quickly became clear that the regime of “Baby Doc” would differ little from that of “Papa Doc.” Today Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere.

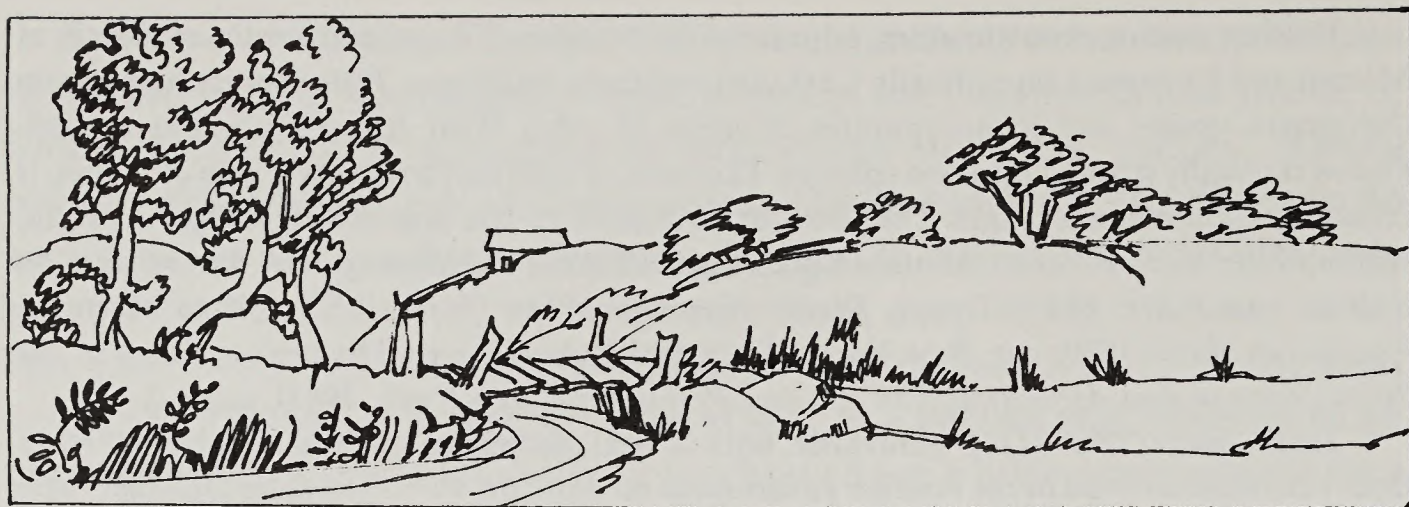
5. William Young, personal communication with the author, July 30, 1984.

6. Ibid.

7. In this paragraph and the ones that follow I am relying heavily on Robert Farris Thompson, “African Influence on the Art of the United States,” in *Black Studies in the University*, ed. Armstead L. Robinson, Craig Foster, and Donald H. Ogilvie (New Haven, 1969), pp. 122-70, reprinted in William Ferris, ed., *Afro-American Folk Art and Crafts* (Boston, 1983), pp. 27-63; and Robert Farris Thompson, *African Art in Motion: Icon and Act* (Los Angeles, 1974), p. 5.

8. P. Mercier, “The Fon of Dahomey,” in *African Worlds*, ed. Daryll Forde (London, 1954); and Thompson, *Flash*, 176-79. For Yoruba examples see William Fagg and John Pemberton, *Yoruba: Sculpture of West Africa* (New York, 1982), pp. 66, 144.

9. For Yoruba examples see Fagg, *Yoruba*, *passim*. Examples from Benin can be found in Ekpo Eyo and Frank Willet, *Treasures of Ancient Nigeria* (New York, 1980), p. 44, *passim*. Mende examples are to be found in William Fagg, *Tribes and Forms in African Art* (London, 1965), p. 8. Finally, examples from Kongo and Kongo-influenced cultures can be seen in Christopher D. Roy, *African Sculpture: The Stanley Collection* (Iowa City, 1979), p. 139; and Margaret Trowell, *Classical African Sculpture* (1954; 3rd rev. ed. New York, 1970), plate XLV. On Kongo see also Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun* (Washington, D. C., 1981), *passim*.



The Historical Events Behind the Celebrated Ballad "Naomi Wise"

by Robert Roote

Arthur Palmer Hudson, eminent folklorist, describes "Poor Naomi" ("Omie Wise") as North Carolina's "principal contribution to American folksong."¹ A part of the "Murdered Girl" tradition, this ballad's well-known British counterparts include "Fair Florella," "The Wexford Girl," and "The Lexington Murder."² Another famous American example is "Pearl Bryan," which depicts the tragedy of an Indian girl who was found decapitated near Fort Thomas, Kentucky, in 1896. But "Naomi Wise" has evolved from an earlier date and is now widely diffused in North Carolina and beyond. The historical facts behind the ballad, however, have not been adequately explored.

The best-known historical account of the Naomi Wise legend was published by Braxton Craven. Born 26 August 1822, some twenty miles below Randleman, a few hundred yards from Deep River, Craven grew up listening to many versions of the story, both ballads and legends.³ Craven's "NAOMI WISE, OR THE VICTIM," published in the January and February editions of the 1851 *Evergreen*, brought together the earliest accounts of Naomi's tragic death.

Craven begins his account by establishing that Naomi Wise was an orphan residing at the home of William Adams in the rural village of New Salem. Her lot was hard: "The thousand comforts that parents can find for their children are never enjoyed by the fatherless."⁴ Following his bleak view of Naomi's youth, Craven develops the story of the Lewis family, emphasizing their ruthlessness and courage.

As the account continues, the relationship of Jonathan Lewis and Naomi Wise unfolds. Lewis lived with his father near "Center meeting-house on Polecat creek in Guilford county."⁵ He clerked for a gentleman

named Benjamin Elliott “at Ashboro’ in Randolph; and in passing from Center to Ashboro’, it was directly in his way to pass through New Salem.”⁶ In Craven’s words, “Jonathan Lewis saw Naomi Wise and loved her. She was the gentle, confiding, unprotected creature that a man like Lewis would love by instinct.... [Naomi’s] love for Lewis was pure and ardent; and the rumor was abroad that a marriage was shortly to take place.”⁷

Complicating the matter, Lewis’ mother felt he might obtain the hand of Hettie Elliott, the sister of Benjamin Elliott, Lewis’ employer. The Elliotts were wealthy, honorable, and highly reputable. According to Craven, “Money, family connection, name and station, were the influences that clouded the fair prospects of innocence, opened the flood gates of evil, and involved all the parties concerned in ruin.”⁸

In any event, Naomi urged Lewis to fulfill his promise of marriage to her. When he did not agree, she threatened to bring him to court. Lewis was alarmed and confused. He charged Naomi upon peril of her life to remain silent; he told her that their marriage was sure, “but that very peculiar circumstances required all to be kept silent.”⁹ At this inopportune time, the rumor concerning Naomi’s pregnancy and her impending marriage reached Hettie. Naturally, Lewis told Miss Elliott that the rumor was a “base malicious [sic] slander, circulated by the enemies of the Lewis family, to ruin his character.”¹⁰ Several days followed during which Lewis was uneasy, distracted from his work, and physically ill.

At length Lewis came to visit Naomi and told her that he was ready to consent to the marriage. He mentioned that he had made all the necessary arrangements and that he would come to take her to the house of a magistrate on a certain day. On Lewis’ appointed day, toward evening, Naomi took her water pail in hand and walked down to the spring below the Adams’ house to await Lewis’ arrival. He soon appeared, and barefooted Naomi mounted the back of Lewis’ horse. As they rode, Naomi perceived Lewis was not riding in the direction of the magistrate. Instead, Lewis kept the direct road to the river. Descending the hill to the river bank, he paused for a short time and then plunged his horse forward into the middle of the ford. He then stopped, and turning in the saddle addressed her: “Naomi, I will tell you what I intend to do; I intend to drown you in this river; we can never marry. I found I could never get away from you, and I am determined to drown you.”¹¹ After Lewis allowed Naomi time to prepare herself to meet her God, he grasped her throat (Craven notes Lewis used his left hand), and their struggles threw them from the horse. Lewis then held Naomi above the water long enough to gather her dress and pull it over her head. He tied a knot in the dress and shoved Naomi under the water. He held her there for some time, smothering her screams under the waters of Deep River. Finally, upon seeing

torches in the distance, Lewis let loose of Naomi's body; he remounted his horse and scampered to the far bank of the river.

An elderly woman named Mrs. Davis lived near the river. She heard Naomi's screams and sent her sons with torches to investigate. However, the boys were afraid to go. They hesitated and arrived after dark in time only to hear a horse galloping up the opposite side of the river bank.

When the next morning dawned, the people of New Salem set out in search of Naomi. Mrs. Adams led a group who set out tracking Naomi down the hill behind the Adams' house to the spring. In the moist soft soil they detected where Naomi had stepped upon a stump to mount a horse. The hoof prints led to the river. Reaching the river, the group met Mrs. Davis and her sons, who were approaching the town from the opposite direction. Mrs. Davis immediately related her experience of the night before, noting that "murder's been done."¹² The entire company hastened to the river to discover the body of Naomi lying against a rock in the current, her head still muffled in her clothing. According to Craven, the coroner was sent for, a jury summoned, and the verdict pronounced: "Drowned by violence."¹³ Jonathan Lewis was immediately suspected, and a group of volunteers pursued him. Lewis had recrossed the river during the previous night, gone back to his parents' house for a change of clothing, and then had headed back to Asheboro early in the morning.

Later that day, Lewis tried to go about his daily tasks, maintaining a mask of innocence. He left Asheboro to attend a sale at the establishment of a Mr. Thomas Cox. People noticed that Lewis was not his usual self, but rather, "reserved, downcast, and restless."¹⁴ He got drunk, met up with Stephen Huzza's daughter, and took her to her parents' home. Lewis had Martha Huzza on his lap when Robert Murdock, the head of the local militia, and his company arrived to place Lewis under arrest.

Lewis was escorted back to the river bank where he was forced to view Naomi's corpse. He put his hand on Naomi's face and smoothed her hair. He appeared to be unmoved. Those present were outraged, and many wanted to execute him on the spot. Craven recounts:

The evidence against Lewis, though circumstantial, was deemed conclusive. The footprints from the stump to the river exactly fitted his horse; hairs upon the skirt on which she rode, were found to fit in color; a small piece torn from Lewis's accoutrements, fitted both rent and texture; his absence from Asheboro', and many other minuter circumstances all conspired to the same point.

In proper form he was committed to jail in Asheboro', to await his trial.¹⁵

The next day Naomi was buried, and the entire community mourned her untimely death.

Craven's account of Lewis' stay in jail is sketchy. He notes that Lewis "broke jail and fled to parts unknown,"¹⁶ and further states that the song of "Omi Wise" followed Lewis to the Falls of Ohio, where Colonel Craven, Colonel Lane, and George Swearengain went in search of him. These

commissioned officers hired two hunters for a fee of seventy-five dollars to help capture Lewis. Craven tells the story of Lewis' capture and return to Randolph County and the removal of his trial to Guilford County, where he was finally tried and acquitted. Craven notes that most of the material witnesses had died or moved away, and much of the minutiae was simply forgotten. According to Craven, Lewis returned to Kentucky and died a few years afterwards. On his deathbed Jonathan Lewis confessed to the murder of Naomi Wise. Only his father was present.

In the headnote to this account Craven remarks that his information had been gathered from the "gray-headed fathers and mothers who lived at the time."¹⁷ After Craven listened to "their various editions,"¹⁸ he had assembled an account providing fabricated dialogue to create suspense and maintain the storyline. For example, in describing Jonathan and Naomi's journey from Adams' Spring to the site of the drowning in Deep River, Craven presents a fictionalized conversation between them:

"Naomi, which do you think is easiest, a slow or sudden death?"

"I'm sure I don't know, but what makes you ask me such a question?"

"Why, I was just thinking about it. But which would you prefer, if you could have choice?"

"I would try to be resigned to whatever Providence might appoint; and since we cannot have a choice, it is useless to have any preferences."

"Well, Naomi, do you think you would like to know the time when you are to die?"

"Why, Jonathan, what do you mean by such questions? I never knew you to be mentioning such things before."¹⁹

After a pause in the conversation, in which Craven imagines that Lewis seemed in a deep reverie but was actually in intense excitement, the villain again speaks:

"Well, Naomi, I believe I know both the time and manner of your death, and I think it is in my power to give you a choice."

"For the Lord's sake, Jonathan, what do you mean; do you intend to kill me, or why do you talk so?"²⁰

As he fabricates the ongoing conversation, Craven relates his dialogue to the scenario as he has envisioned it. After Lewis plunges his horse forward into the ford at Deep River, he turns in the saddle and, once again, addresses her:

"Naomi, I will tell you what I intend to do; I intend to drown you in this river; we can never marry. I found I could never get away from you, and I am determined to drown you."²¹

According to Craven, a long discussion followed Lewis' speech, a time during which Naomi pleaded for her life, and Lewis explained his reasons for drowning her.

Apart from the fact that neither Craven nor anyone else was privy to the conversation of Lewis and Naomi, other elements suggest the unreliability of Craven's account. It is unlikely that in the middle of the river, after dark,

in the heat of excitement surrounding Lewis' plan to drown Naomi that he would engage in such an extended casual conversation with her. What we have is not historical fact, but one man's rendition of the tragic event as he imagined it. Even the evidence that Craven asserts is "in every respect true"²² must be questioned: The validity of testimony from the "gray-headed fathers and mothers," published forty-four years after the event, is unreliable. In order to establish a factual account of events surrounding the Naomi Wise legend, other sources must be considered. The 1944 Randleman account, *The Story of Naomi Wise*, except for spurious end matter, follows Craven, and is useless at this point.

What are the documented facts surrounding Naomi's drowning and its aftermath? The first historical evidence that can be found is in the Randolph County Superior Court Minutes. On 30 March 1807, Reuben Wood, Clerk of Court, recorded that "The Grand Jury returned, a bill to the Court against Jonathan Lewis for Murder, & indorsed thereon a trial bill; Upon which the Said Jonathan Lewis was arraigned; plead not guilty, & put himself Upon his country."²³ On the same day Wood issued summonses to several witnesses, demanding their appearances before the Judge of the Randolph County Superior Court on 5 October 1807: one summons called Catherine and William Maples to give evidence on behalf of Lewis,²⁴ and another called Archibald Harrison, Jerimiah Fields, Anthony Chamass [sic], Steven Emery, and Lenny Emery in Lewis' behalf.²⁵ A third summons ordered Eli Powell, and William Dennis to testify for the State, plaintiff in the case.²⁶ Also, on 30 March 1807, Randolph County Solicitor Edward Jones issued a writ to transport Mary Vickory to the Guilford County Superior Court in Martinsville to give testimony in behalf of the State against Jonathan Lewis on 26 October 1807. Apparently Jones had prior knowledge that the court would endorse the indictment against Lewis at the arraignment on 5 October. It was then customary for arraignments for the Fall Court Term to be made this far in advance. The note also documents the change of venue, establishing Guilford as the county where Lewis was to be tried.²⁷

On 8 April 1807, County Magistrate John Cravan commanded Joshua Cravan, Randolph County Jailer, to receive Lewis in custody.

I herwith [sic] send you the body of Jonathan Lewis of said County Constable Charged with the Murder of a Certain Omia Wise.

You are therefore Commanded to receive him into your Jail Of Custody and him there safely keep without bail or Morriprise [sic] until he is from thence delivered by a due Course of Law.²⁸

This order establishes the historical connection of Jonathan Lewis with the murder of Naomi Wise, spelled Omia. Also the order proves that the murder actually occurred in 1807, rather than 1808, the date invariably given in prior treatment of Naomi Wise, the ballad and the legend.

On 18 April 1807, County Magistrates John Cravan, Michael Harvey, and Benjamin Elliott contacted Alexander Gray, Lieutenant Colonel Commander of the County Militia. Their correspondence dealt with County Sheriff Isaac Lane's apprehension "that there may be some danger of the said Prisoner's [Lewis'] being assisted by some persons to make his escape from the said Gaol, it being remote from any Dwelling."²⁹ Gray was ordered to call out the militia to guard the jail.

Gray responded immediately, issuing a command to Captain Benjamin Elliott:

You are hereby Commanded that out of the militia of said County you order a Guard of five men well armed who together with yourself are required to attend at the said Gaol & Safely guard the same until the Next County Court to be held on the first Monday in May Next [4 May 1807] at which time you will either be relieved from that duty or Continued as the Court may direct.³⁰

On 30 September 1807, another witness, Sally Shaftner, submitted to a summons to testify in behalf of Lewis at his arraignment before the Randolph County Superior Court on 5 October 1807.³¹

On 3 October 1807, Alexander Gray and Sheriff Lane issued a further command to Captain Elliott to remain guarding the county jail until 6 October, the day after Lewis' arraignment:

...Seth Wade, Clement Arnold and Daniel Dawson Esquires three of the Justices of the peace for said County...were called on by the sheriff to View the Gaol and provide for the safe keeping of Jonathan Lewis a State prisoner Confined therein on a Charge of Murder.³²

Lewis did not fare well in his 5 October hearing: "a bill of Indictment was preferred and sent to the Grand Jury against One Jonathan Lewis for the murder of one Omi Wise a single Woman that the Jury found the said bill of Indictment and endorsed thereon."³³ Also on 5 October, Clerk of Court Reuben Wood outlined the procedure for Mary Vickory's appearance in Guilford County on 26 October to give testimony against Lewis:

State of North Carolina

To the Sheriff of Randolph County Greeting

You are hereby Command [sic] to take the body of Mary Vickory wife of Christopher Vickory and have her before some Justice of the peace for the County of Randolph then and there to have some good Lawfull person bound for her appearance at the Superior Court of Law to be held for the County of Guilford at the fourth Monday of this instant then and there to Give evidence in behalf of the State against Jonathan Lewis.³⁴

However, the 26 October trial never transpired. The Randolph County Criminal Action Papers state that "on the Ninth day of October in the year aforesaid [1807] the said jonathan Lewis broke the aforesaid Jaol & prison and feloniously made his Escape therefrom."³⁵

The evidence surrounding Lewis' escape remains sketchy. On 26 March 1808, magistrate John Cravan, Jr., bound Joseph Buller in the sum of fifty

pounds for his appearance at the Randolph County Superior Court on 4 April 1808, to testify in behalf of the state against “Daniel Dason [sic] and other that was gard [sic] the night that Jonathan Lewis broke gaol.”³⁶ During the October Superior Court Session, official charges were brought against Dawson (see note 32 above):

...one Daniel Dawson late of same County labourer well knowing the premises and intending and contriving to procure the Escape of the said Jonathan Lewis out of the said Jail afterward to wit on the Eleventh day of October in the year aforesaid in this county aforesaid with force and arms unlawfully and knowingly did bring and cause to be brought and delivered to the said Jonathan Lewis in the Jail aforesaid one knife and one Sword to the Intent and purpose that the said Jonathan Lewis might and should thereby be enabled to make his Escape out of the said Jail.³⁷

What became of Daniel Dawson remains a mystery. Perhaps the papers concerning his trial were destroyed in the 1872 Guilford County Courthouse fire which caused a partial loss of records.³⁸ In any event, on 11 November 1808, Captain Benjamin Elliott provided the county with a list of those who guarded the Randolph County Prison during Lewis’ confinement. Daniel Dawson stood guard for twenty-nine days, the longest of any soldier.³⁹ If he wanted to help Lewis escape, he could have easily done so. He had the longest direct access to the prisoner.

Daniel Dawson was not the only man charged with aiding Lewis’ escape. Records show that Sheriff Lane himself was held responsible:

State vs Isaac Lane

Fall term 1811

held for the escape of Jonathan Lewis—In this case the the [sic] Defendent, having produced the body of said Lewis & lodged him in Orange County Jail.

A. D. Murphy, prosecuting for the state enters, a, nolle proceque—⁴⁰

This document exposes a fallacy in Craven’s *Evergreen* account and the 1944 Randleman publication, *The Story of Naomi Wise*. According to Craven, after breaking jail Lewis “fled to parts unknown...[and] was living at the Falls of Ohio.”⁴¹ Craven weaves the story of Lewis’ recapture and trial for Naomi’s drowning. Randleman’s publication, essentially Craven’s account repeated, adds a postscript which documents Lewis’ return to Randolph County, his 1815 trial in Guilford County, and his subsequent release. Importantly, both accounts fail to acknowledge Lewis’ recapture in 1811 and his trial in October 1812 for his jailbreak in 1807.

Whereas Sheriff Lane was cleared of guilt, others were not. The papers of Governor William Hawkins relate:

that at a Superior Court of Law held for Randolph County, William Fields, John Lewis, Ebenezer Reynolds, and John Green, were convicted of having aided and assisted, a certain Jonathan Lewis, charged with the murder of Omie Wise, to make his escape from Justice, and were sentenced to imprisonment and fined.⁴²

On 17 December 1811, after receiving “sundry petitions, signed by many respectable persons,”⁴³ pleading for the release of these men, Governor Hawkins granted the convicts Executive clemency.

Records show that Lewis remained in the custody of Orange County Jailer Samuel Turrentine from his recapture in the fall of 1811 until 21 October 1812.⁴⁴ In April 1812, Turrentine obtained authorization to remove Lewis from the Hillsborough Jail.⁴⁵ He delivered Lewis to the Guilford County Superior Court in Greensboro on 22 April 1812,⁴⁶ employing “a guard of men—& Irons...and a chain.”⁴⁷

In October 1812, Thomas Caldwell, Randolph County Superior Court Clerk, accepted five hundred pounds as bail bond for Lewis from Jerimiah Fields and Thomas Kirkman:

Recognizane [sic] of each in the Sum of Two hundred and fifty pounds for the appearance of Jonathan Lewis at the next Superior Court to be holden [sic] for the County of Randolph.⁴⁸

The next session of the Superior Court was held on 29 March 1813. However, Lewis did not stand trail for his 1807 jailbreak until the Fall Term of the Superior Court.

On 4 October 1813, testimony was delivered concerning Lewis’ escape:

The Jurors for the state upon their oath Present that on the Tenth day of October in the year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and seven a certain Jonathan Lewis was confined in the publick Jaol in Ashborough in the County of Randolph aforesaid legally charged and committed for the murder of a certain Neomie Wise found dead in Deep River in said County—...a aforesaid Jonathan Lewis late of said County former well knowing the premises but being a person of an evil mind and wicked disposition...with force and arms against the will and without the consent or permission of the said Sheriff and of the then Jaoler of the said Jaol unlawfully...[did] Escape and go at large out of the said Jaol and from the custody of the said Isaac Lane Sheriff.⁴⁹

Witness tickets for Lewis’ October 1813 trial establish that Jacob Craven, Benjamin Elliott, John Craven, George Swaringen and Henry Brown were some of the witnesses called to testify for the State.⁵⁰ When Henry Brown failed to appear and give testimony, he prompted a fifty-pound fine from Clerk of Court Joseph Wood.⁵¹ The jury delivered a verdict against Lewis; it found

the Defendant Guilty of breaking Jail & rescuing himself as charged in the bill of Indictment; but not Guilty as to the rescuing of Moses Smith [a fellow prisoner] from legal confinement: Judgement of the Court that the Defendant pay a fine of Ten pounds and costs & be imprisoned thirty days.⁵²

Actually, according to Randolph County Jailer George Swearingen, Lewis spent forty-seven days in jail.⁵³

Lewis’ extended confinement was due to his inability to pay his fine and costs for the October trial. Therefore, in open court on 20 November 1813, he applied for the benefit of the Insolvent Debtors Act. Because Randolph

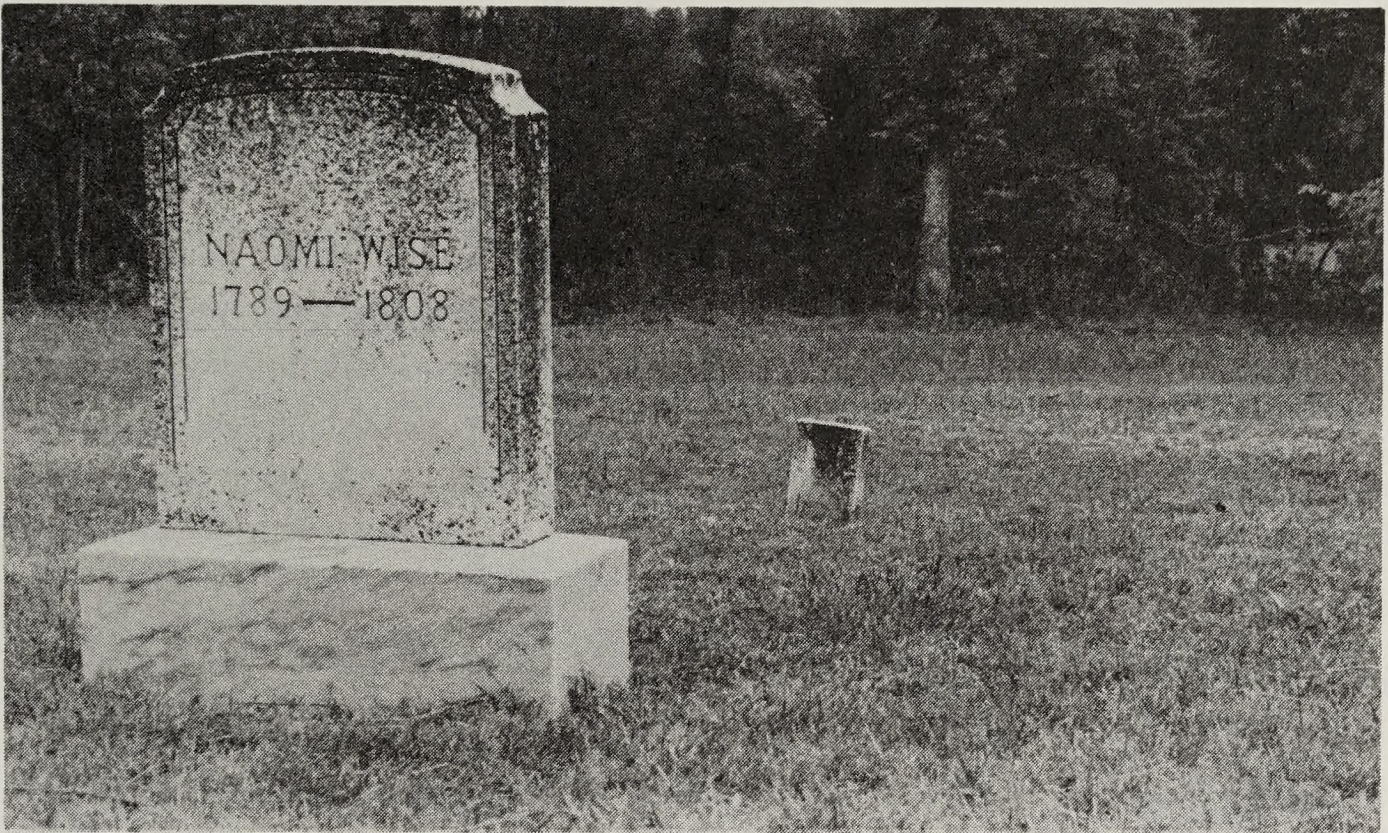


Street sign with former Naomi factory in background, Randleman, N.C.
 Photograph by Robert Roote.

County Attorney General Edward Jones did not appear to challenge the suit, Lewis was issued the Oath of an Insolvent Debtor, was relieved of his debt to the county, and was discharged from prison! This is his signed affidavit:

I Jonathan Lewis do Solemly [sic] Swear that I have not the worth of Forty Shillings Sterling money—in any worldly Substance Either in debts owing to me Or otherwise howsoever Over besides my wearing apparel Working Tools Arms for Muster One Bed & furniture one Loom One Wheel & One pr. Chards & that I have not at any time Since my Imprisonment or before directly or indirectly, Sold assigned or otherwise disposed of or made over in trust for my Self or to defraud any creditor to whom I am indebted—to the best of my Knowledge so help me God.⁵⁴

While the documentary record is incomplete and lacks the fictionalized quality of the Craven account, the court record raises interesting questions which need or invite answers, even speculative ones. One such question concerns Lewis' 1815 trial for drowning Naomi Wise. Nowhere in the court records is the trial mentioned. Although the 1944 Randleman publication, *The Story of Naomi Wise*, cites documentation concerning the 1815 trial, the information is misrepresented and pertains rather to Lewis' October 1812 trial for his jailbreak of 1807.⁵⁵ It is unlikely that Lewis would be released from custody after serving his sentence in 1812 because he still faced a murder trial. However, the facts show that five years after his indictment for the murder of Naomi Wise, Lewis was tried—not for murder—but for his 1807 jailbreak. Forty-seven days after his trial, Lewis was released via the Insolvent Debtors Act. The possibility exists that Lewis never went to trial for Naomi's murder.



Naomi Wise grave with footstone marked "NW," New Salem, N.C. Photograph by Robert Roote.

Even though the complete record surrounding Naomi's death may remain forever a mystery, the court documents affirm that Omia Wise lived and loved, was murdered and was found in Deep River, in Randolph County, North Carolina, in 1807. And it is in Randleman, Randolph County, where Naomi's legend began, that she is most remembered. In the surrounding community there is a Naomi Street, an existing (although abandoned) Naomi Church, and a Naomi Bridge. Located some fifty yards from this bridge, the former Naomi factory, on the corner of East Naomi and Mill streets, is now the J. P. Stevens & Co., Inc., Randleman Plant. Just off the road to New Salem are the bare remains of a shrine at Adams' Spring dedicated to her memory, and in the graveyard across the street from the Old Providence Church in New Salem stands a stone monument which bears the simple inscription:

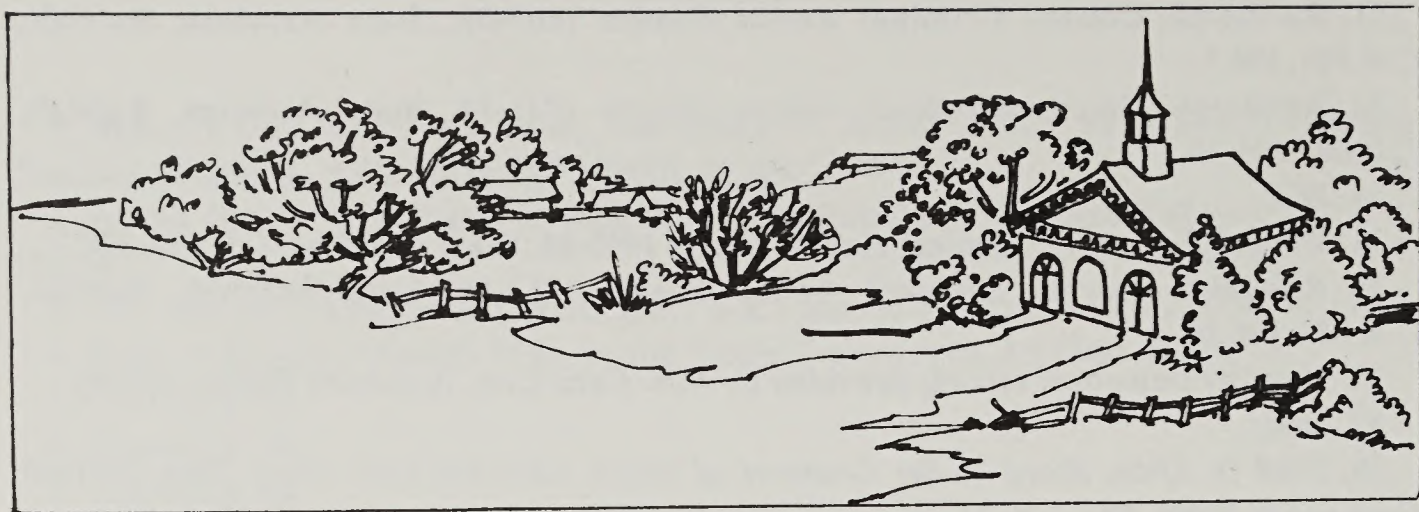
NAOMI WISE
1789-1808

Perhaps the most important tributes to Naomi Wise are the simple ballad variants that have kept her legend alive for more than 175 years. In these this murdered country girl moves from early nineteenth-century Randolph County into the timeless heart and soul of her native state. Where the age-old tales of deception are vague and impersonal, Naomi's localized tragedy is real. Naomi Wise is North Carolina's "Murdered Girl" in the ballad tradition.

NOTES

1. Newman Ivey White et al., eds., *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore* (Durham, N.C.: Duke U.P., 1952), II, 690.
2. Arthur Field, "Why Is the 'Murdered Girl' So Popular," *Midwest Folklore*, 1 (1951), 113-14.
3. *The Story of Naomi Wise* (Randleman, N.C.: Randolph Rotary Club, 1944), p. 110.
4. Braxton Craven, "Naomi Wise, or the Victim," *Evergreen*, 1:3 (Jan. 1851), 78.
5. Craven, p. 80.
6. Craven, p. 80.
7. Craven, p. 80.
8. Craven, p. 81.
9. Craven, p. 81.
10. Craven, p. 82. Craven never explicitly states Naomi was pregnant, but I infer it from the discussion.
11. Craven, p. 111.
12. Craven, p. 112.
13. Craven, p. 112.
14. Craven, p. 113.
15. Craven, p. 113.
16. Craven, p. 114.
17. Craven, p. 78.
18. Craven, p. 78.
19. Craven, p. 111.
20. Craven, p. 111.
21. Craven, p. 111.
22. Craven, p. 78.
23. Randolph County Superior Court Minutes 1807-33, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.X.86, p. 4.
24. Randolph County Criminal Action Papers 1807-08, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.326.7.
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28. Randolph County Criminal Action Papers 1813-14, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.326.10.
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30. Ibid.

31. Randolph County Criminal Action Papers 1807-08, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.326.7.
32. Randolph County Criminal Action Papers 1813-14, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.326.10.
33. Ibid.
34. Randolph County Criminal Action Papers 1807-08, State Archives, C.R.081.326.7.
35. Randolph County Criminal Action Papers 1813-14, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.326.10.
36. Handwritten court record, provided by Mrs. Cecil Cox, Asheboro Public Library.
37. Ibid.
38. Fred A. Olds, *Story of the Counties of North Carolina with Other Data* (Oxford Orphanage Press, 1921), p. 33.
39. Randolph County Criminal Action Papers 1813-14, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.326.10.
40. Randolph County Superior Court Minutes 1807-33, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.X.86, p. 73.
41. Craven, p. 114.
42. Randolph County Miscellaneous Records, 17 Dec. 1811, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.928.11.
43. Ibid.
44. Randolph County Accounts and Claims 1810-19, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.910.1.
45. Randolph County Superior Court Minutes 1807-33, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.X.86, p. 340.
46. Ibid.
47. Randolph County Accounts and Claims 1784-1839, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.910.1 (Section 1810-19).
48. Randolph County Criminal Action Papers 1813-14, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.326.10.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Interview with Mrs. Cecil Cox, Asheboro Public Library, 23 Nov. 1981.
52. Randolph County Superior Court Minutes 1807-33, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.X.86, p. 73.
53. Randolph County Insolvent Debtors, Feb. 1814, State Archives, Raleigh, C.R.081.914.1.
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55. *The Story of Naomi Wise*, pp. 30-1.



Orphan Character Notes in Appalachia

by Junius Allison

Years ago when I was in grade school in western North Carolina, we had a teacher who each year assigned to her class the writing of an essay on “What Happened to the Lost Colony” and another who required a paper on the Lost State of Franklin thus giving the pupils an opportunity to speculate on two of the popular episodes in our early history, and, at the same time, teaching a bit of creative writing. Never, however, did we read or hear about one other “lost” fragment of our heritage: the “lost tonal tribe”—meaning those settlers of the mountain region who used the odd character notation for sight reading of music in Appalachia. These were the “shaped notes” that indicated the tone by their unique shape, whether written alone or placed on the lines and spaces of a musical staff.¹

Several reasons could be given to explain why historians and writers of textbooks have ignored or neglected this quaint sidetrack in the development of vocal religious music in the rural mountain areas. By no recognized standard can much of the music be called great, except perhaps a few classical melodies and some folk tunes remembered by the settlers from their Irish, Scotch, Welsh, English, and German background. The bad verse, dwelling upon sin and sinners, redemption, and salvation, which replaced the singing of the Psalms, cannot claim true literary value. This applies especially to the more recent “white spirituals” written or arranged by compilers in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The music was very limited in scope: only four notes at first, and written primarily for male voices—treble, tenor, counter and bass, with the tenor carrying the melody. Later, the parts were taken by men and women interchangeably. In defense of the simplicity of the four-note system, Ananias Davisson, a prominent tunebook compiler and singing school teacher, wrote:

I will venture to assert that any person who will undertake to teach a raw set of youngsters that have no knowledge of the degree of sound will find it sufficiently difficult to get the unavoidable semitones performed with accuracy without being pestered with sinks and raises and primitive restorations.²

Further, the music was characterized by frequent repetition, and there was similarity in the tempo of many of the tunes. The musical settings emphasized tenor melodies which resembled the English ballads of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the resulting harmony adhering little to established rules of composition. The singers, and perhaps most of the singing school teachers, were self-taught, and few had any formal training in music.

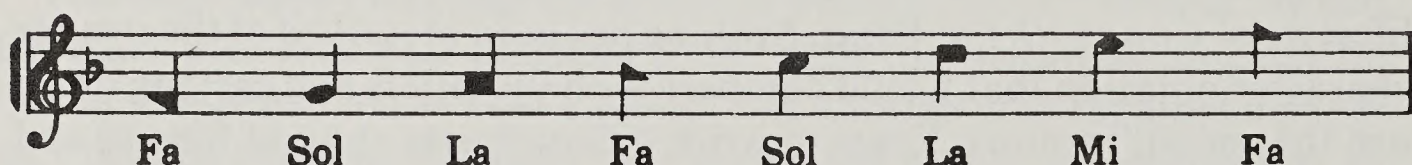
Compared to other folk customs, this use of shape-notes to learn tunes and provide music for the church services had a very short existence—a little more than enough to span three or four generations. So, one can understand why the term “buckwheat” notes and its progeny have not evoked the response from the professional recorders of history as is the case of the more dramatic or romantic slogans and catchwords, such as “Croatoan” carved on a doorpost or the nostalgia so many have for the lifestyle of *Gone with the Wind*. Nothing has been preserved of the strange character notation that would compare with the letters and carving on an urn that might inspire a Keats to write, “Thou foster child of Silence and slow Time.” Yet the practice of singing shape-notes persists in many rural communities.

There is something engaging about the almost primitive characters, the practical reasons for their invention, and the controversial twists of their use in dozens of settlements in the mountain area that stretches from western New York to north Georgia. They represent more than a mere cultural mutation in the development of a religious music without benefit of keyboard instruments. Even though they were, in a way, orphan notes without ties to more formal arrangements of the round-note system, they cannot be separated from the unsophisticated hill folk. It was more than a bit of sudden inspiration and native talent for gadgetry that led to the simple but ingenious device for helping untrained singers “sight read” and provided a satisfactory kind of vocal music in the early meeting houses and later for the churches, singing schools, and conventions. This notation was an artful invention, modified, and improved by several pioneer teachers who adapted the seventeenth century secular fasola notation common in the English countryside. Indeed, its origin was earlier than 1605, when Edmund in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* (I.ii) cried, “O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! Fa, sol, la, mi.” These character notes helped to encourage part-singing in America and led to the establishment of independent singing schools, thus freeing their singing groups from the control of the church.

That this form of character notation is considered virgin territory enough to be approved for Ph.D. and Master's degree research is some evidence that information about shape notes is not widespread.³ But these research papers are not readily available to the public. A few books and articles, primarily by musical scholars, have been published which are keeping alive fragments of this folk tradition. Foremost among the writers was George Pullen Jackson, whose *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* was published in 1933. This is the first, the most readable and the most comprehensive study of the fasola folk and the "buckwheat" notes.⁴

The first effort to assist the untrained to do sight reading did not include the "shaped" notation, but simply the use of four letters suggested by John Tufts in New England before 1800. He placed FSLM on a five-line staff to represent fa, sol, la, mi for the singing of Psalm tunes.⁵ Then in 1802, William Little, in his teaching guide, *The Easy Instructor*,⁶ used four different shapes of notes for the syllables:

FOUR-SHAPE NOTATION



SEVEN-SHAPE NOTATION

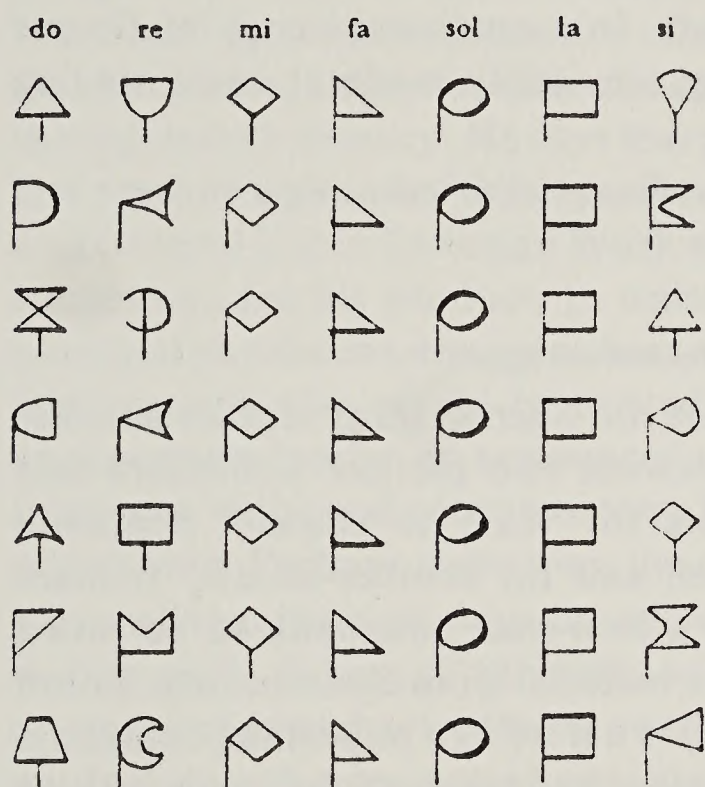


George Pullen Jackson gives William Smith joint credit with Little for this invention. Then, to confuse the origin further, Andrew Law issued his "Musical Primer" and the "Art of Singing," using the same shapes but without the staff of lines and spaces. He claimed this as his own invention, which looked like this:

Go Church DELAWARE No. 50

Let each with every life and sin be joined, the Saviour reigns: His word like fire prepares his way, And mountains melt to plains, And mountains,

Jackson's research revealed that between 1815 and 1855 there were nineteen songbooks compiled "for churches, singing schools, and private societies."⁷ William Walker's *Southern Harmony* (1835) and Benjamin Franklin White's *Sacred Harp* (1844) were the most popular. In 1834, Timothy B. Mason introduced his *The Ohio Sacred Harp* printed in round notes. He made a futile effort to convert the singers west of the Alleghenies to this more modern style. As something of a compromise, Jesse Aikin used the four fasola notes and added three others, making a new doremi system of seven notes. His songbook, *The Christian Minstrel*, printed in 1846, was so much in demand that 171 editions were issued. Such determined four-note compilers as Walker were forced to switch to the doremi arrangement. Several other singing school teachers advanced their own versions of the shapes of the characters:⁸



The rows represent: 1. Aikin (1846), 2. Auld (1847), 3. Swan (1848), 4. Funk (1851), 5. Gillham (1854), 6. Johnson (1853), 7. Walker (1866).

However, since Aikin's designs proved to be more practical as note-heads, his imitators abandoned the competition. So, only Aikin's system prevailed after he made it available to all songbook publishers, about 1873, according to Jackson.

The story of shaped notes carries a theme of controversy. Even though the rural people resisted efforts to establish round-note singing, itinerant singing school teachers continued to ridicule the shape-note practice.⁹ Then, as the population became more urbanized, more musical instruments became available, and many musically-trained people moved into the area. This change decreased the need for an easy sight-reading method and increased the interest in formalized round-note scores and compositional techniques.¹⁰ Shaped note use retreated to the more isolated rural areas of the mountains, later moving west and south, but concentrated in

Appalachia. Over the years, preference for this character notation was found in rural communities as far west as Texas and as far south as Florida.

Another conflict existed within the church congregations, one over the nature of singing schools. At first, the churches encouraged their members to learn and practice hymn singing, but a sharp difference of opinion arose when the more conservative leaders detected evil aspects of this flourishing practice. Some of the Psalm singers who still preferred the “lining out” system (wherein the singers repeated a line read or sung by the leader) felt that singing the fasola symbols was blasphemous. Also, since many of the practice sessions were held at night, the social motive, they said, became greater than the religious one. It was argued that because so many young people liked the singing schools, they must be sinful.¹¹ I found some evidence that this questionable interest must have existed among the younger singers at a more recent date. In a much-used copy of *Gospel Hosannas*, I found pencil scribbling, obviously made at some singing function:

“If that boy doesn’t quit looking at me, I am going to look straight through him.”

“He just keeps looking at you.”

“I think he surely will know me when he sees me again.”¹²

Joe S. James in *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp* reports another controversy—a personality clash between two pioneer publishers that affected the publication of hymnals for years to come.¹³ Benjamin Franklin White, a talented musician, and his brother-in-law, William Walker, compiled a manuscript for a four-note songbook to be called *Southern Harmony*. Walker took the material from Spartanburg, South Carolina, where both musicians lived, to a northern publishing company. When the book was issued (1835), Walker had taken all the credit with no mention of White, the principal composer. Because of the disagreement over this endeavor, White moved to Atlanta, where in 1844 he published his highly successful *Sacred Harp*. Even though the songbook was never adopted by any denomination (perhaps because it contained secular tunes as well as religious songs), it became the most popular hymnal among the many publications that began to appear throughout the region.

Controversy continued to arise over the publication of later editions of the *Sacred Harp* hymnal. In 1963, L. P. Odem claimed that the Sacred Harp Publishing Company had infringed on his rights as the owner, based upon an assignment by a daughter of a previous copyright holder. The case was litigated in the Federal District Court in Birmingham, Alabama.¹⁴ The Court, ruling for the defendant, outlined the history of the ownership of the frequently revised songbook. Documentary evidence introduced at the trial revealed that the *Original Sacred Harp*, copyrighted in 1911 by J. S.

James, was a revision of a book published in 1869 and that it included songs that were old at the time of this publication. In 1927, J. S. James sold the copyright to a Joe R. James for \$1,500. The new owner in 1934 transferred the title of the book and the plates used for printing to a group of men who subsequently became the owners of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company. After the death of J. S. James, his daughter attempted to sell to Odem the rights to the songbook and the "assignment" was recorded in the copyright office in 1938. However, the Federal Court held that James had conveyed all his rights to the book prior to his death and, therefore, the daughter had no interest to sell to Odem. So, with a clear title, the publishing company in 1960 issued another edition of the favorite perennial, the *Original Sacred Harp*.

The rash of new songbooks issued in the latter part of the 1800's and the first part of the 1900's led to a competition among publishers as active and "hard sell" as could be found for other consumer items. Jackson reported that he counted thirty-six different songbooks published in the first half of the eighteenth century. He says there were doubtless others. A typical fly leaf read: "For Sunday Schools, Revivals, Singing Schools, Conventions and General Use in Christian Work and Worship." Each compiler became a salesman for his product. In order to reach the maximum number of potential purchasers, the publishers organized quartets and other harmonizing groups who would be invited to sing at various meetings. These engagements carried an announced religious purpose, combined in many instances with good entertainment. But for the compiler, it was calculated advertising. Perhaps these were the country's first singing commercials.

I recall that this technique for selling books was used as late as the 1920's by George W. Sebren of Asheville. Sebren was a composer and compiler of a number of paperback editions containing shape-notes so arranged on the musical scale that one knowing only round-notes could accompany singers on a piano. In the back country, it was considered quite an event when the Sebren singers would attend a songfest and reveal the virtues of the latest publication.¹⁵

Buell Cobb, Jr., of West Georgia College, reports that "Prior to 1900, instrumental music became generally available, and the shape-note hymnals began to fade. Although the rural way of life and the era of all-day singing with dinner on the ground appear threatened, a few old-time books, along with some gospel song publications, have survived."¹⁶ The two books which are now used almost exclusively by the shape-note singers are *The Christian Harmony*,¹⁷ using the seven-note arrangement, and *The Sacred Harp*,¹⁸ devoted to the four-note syllables. Two widely disparate groups who have joined efforts to preserve this bit of Americana are the Primitive Baptist churches and the heritage centers in a few colleges, such as Western Carolina University, Berea College, and Appalachian State University.

Each note system has its separate participating singers and organizations with little crossover by the leaders, except for the folklore enthusiasts whose interest are more general. Even though the groups are somewhat loosely organized, there are national, regional, state, and local singing conventions.

Typical of the annual *Christian Harmony* “sings” were those held in Ellijay, Georgia (Tickantley Primitive Baptist Church) and Etowah, North Carolina (Public School Auditorium) in 1984. The procedures were almost identical. Here is a composite of what took place:¹⁹

Some 200-300 people in Sunday suits and dresses gather in an auditorium designed for a smaller congregation. Songbooks are distributed. At ten o'clock sharp, the leaders walk to the front of the group, hang their jackets on polished hooks, conveniently attached to the nearby wall, and without introduction or words of convocation, one leader stands and announces the page number of the hymn he has selected. He sounds the first note without the aid of a pitch pipe or musical instrument. The tenor, bass, and alto singers join with the note for their particular parts. They all first sing through the hymn by notes only. Then they sing the words, beating time with wide swings of the arms. The first leader takes three selections before he returns to his seat. After a short period of silence, another leader rises and announces his selection. This routine is followed by five or six others. Among them are two completely unself-conscious boys (one as young as 12 years) who learned shape notes “at home,” “in the church,” or “at singing school.” For more than thirty minutes the hall is filled with uncertain harmony of strong voices. Then recess is called. After the regrouping, the local or visiting minister takes a text and moves a Biblical event about a man named Gideon and his three hundred followers to the present time with a message that demonstrates how good overcomes evil. The high point of the convention is next: dinner on the ground—a spread so tempting and so generous one would think the afternoon singers would be short of breath. But not so. Another full hour of ringing tunes seems to give thanks for another enjoyable trip through the pages of *The Christian Harmony*.

This group seems to rely principally upon individual leaders to organize meetings, teach singing schools, and promote the custom of shape-note singing. Good examples are J. B. Parker of Ellijay, a leader recognized throughout the region, and the late Frank Reed of Fairview, North Carolina, who taught a notation system based upon his first music book, *The Rudiments of Class, Choir, and Congregation Singing*, published in 1800.²⁰ Most of the leaders I interviewed were elderly, but one of a few exceptions was Scott Swanton of Etowah, North Carolina. He is a college student who sings and teaches shape note music. He told me that he prefers *The Christian Harmony* hymnal, but he often uses the books having the

four-note scores. So keen is his interest in these primitive musical symbols that he would like to devote much of his adult life to teaching the history and the technique of sight reading shape notes.²¹

There appears to be a larger number of the *Sacred Harp* singers. Their catalog lists a publication containing the names of more than 1,700, and the directory of annual Sacred Harp singings (1983-1984) gives the date and location for 225 such meetings in Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky. One of these at Berea College is devoted to young people, and many of them are statewide gatherings. Most of them use the *Original Sacred Harp* hymnal with 1971 *Denson Revisions*.²²

Yet, despite the optimistic announcements of the shape-note singers, this tradition remains a "cultural antique" of the Appalachians with only a comparatively small network of ardent devotees who are keeping alive this persistent vestige of our heritage. Many people never have heard of shape notes, and only an even smaller group would know the significance of a diamond, a half moon, and a triangle arranged on a musical scale.

It is not that the country is without a communal memory, but rather it seems easier to remember the more dramatic cultural experiences in our history. With our appreciation for artifacts of all ages, from the hand-crafted dulcimers to a reconstructed colonial village, these character notations deserve more than a footnote, even though they are not designs or products that now serve any economic or artistic need. Perhaps the determined few—the folklorists and the singers—can be as victorious as Gideon's three hundred described by the Primitive Baptist minister in Ellijay.

NOTES

1. Many of the general comments about shape-notes are based upon the author's memories of his early life in Appalachia. The more recent data include material obtained from on-the-spot visits, interviews, and correspondence (summer, 1984) with individuals having special knowledge of shape-notes. These people include the following: Dr. Eva Adcock, professor, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, N.C.; Dr. Edith Card, former teacher of music and supervisor, Fountain Inn, S.C.; James Egerton, shape-note song leader, Mill Springs, N.C.; Mrs. Hannah Reed Jarvis, recorder of religious music, Riceville Road, R.F.D. 2, Asheville, N.C.; Hugh McGraw, religious leader and musician, Temple, Georgia; Lawrence Mooney, singing school teacher, Ellijay, Georgia; Artus Moser, balladeer and artist, Swannanoa, N.C.; J. B. Parker, singing school teacher, group organizer, Ellijay, Georgia; Mrs. Henry Pope, genealogist, London, Kentucky; Dr. John Ramsay, college professor, Berea, Kentucky; Ms. Liz Smathers Shaw, musician, Canton, N.C.; Ms. Michael Ann Williams, folklorist, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, N.C.; Mrs. Ed Yieser, religious leader, Waynesboro, Tennessee; and Scott Swanton, singer and teacher, Etowah, N.C.

2. Harry Eskew, "Shape-Note Hymnody in the Shenandoah Valley 1816-1860," diss., Tulane U., 1966.

3. See Eskew; Charles L. Ellington, "The Sacred Harp Tradition of the South: Its Origin and Evolution," diss., Florida State U., 1969; Rachel A. Harley, "Ananias Davisson, Southern Tunebook Compiler," diss., U. of Michigan, 1972; Edith Card, "William Walker's Music—Then and Now: Study of Performance Style," diss., Florida State U., 1975; and D. Horn, "Shape-Note Hymnody and Art Music of Early America," M.A. thesis, U. of Rochester, 1942.
4. George Pullen Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina P., 1933).
5. George Pullen Jackson, "Buckwheat Notes," *Musical Quarterly*, 19 (1913), 393.
6. *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1969), p. 309. See also Jackson, "Buckwheat Notes," p. 393, for a copy of the title page of Andrew Law's *The Art of Singing*.
7. Jackson, "Buckwheat Notes," n. 4, p. 395.
8. Eric Blum, ed., *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th ed. (New York: St. Martin's P., 1954), p. 184.
9. Bill Malone, *Southern Music—American Music* (Lexington: U.P. of Kentucky, 1979), pp. 6-8.
10. Henry Wilder Fort, *Three Centuries of American Hymnody* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe-string P., 1961), pp. 102 ff.
11. Edith Card, "The Tradition of Shaped Notes," *Foxfire* 7 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1982), pp. 280 ff.
12. *Gospel Hosannas* (Lawrenceburg, Tenn.: Vaughan Music Publishers, 1913). This hymnal, originally sold for twenty-five cents per copy, includes notations.
13. Joe S. James, *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp and Its Author, B.F. White, and Contributors* (Douglasville, Ga.: New South Book, 1904), passim.
14. L.P. Odem vs. Sacred Harp Publishing Co., Civil Action No. 1208, U.S. District Court, Northern District of Alabama, 20 May 1963. For some unknown reason, this case was not reported in the Federal Supplement which is usually cited for Federal district cases.
15. This observation is based upon the author's experience in the 1920's in several communities in Buncombe County, N.C.
16. Buell Cobb, Jr., "Shape-Note Symbols," *Encyclopedia of Southern History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U.P., 1979), p. 1094.
17. William Walker, *The Christian Harmony* (Philadelphia: E.W. Miller, 1901).
18. J.S. James, *Original Sacred Harp*, Denson revision (Bremen, Ga.: Sacred Harp Publishing, 1936).
19. Statements are based on the author's observations while attending singings and through interviews with various singing school leaders during summer 1984 in Ellijay, Ga., and Asheville, Swannanoa, and Cullowhee, N.C.
20. Anna Paulette Witt, "The Granddaddy of Gospel Music," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, 31 Aug. 1984, p. 3.
21. Telephone interview, Scott Swanton, Jan. 1985.
22. The Sacred Harp Publishing Co. (Hugh McGraw, Secretary, Bremen, Ga.) issues a bulletin, *Names and Addresses of Sacred Harp Singers*, which indicates that in 1984 there were "more than 1700" such individuals. Sacred Harp Publishing also distributes a *Directory of Minutes and Schedule of Annual Sacred Harp Singings*.

This issue of the *North Carolina Folklore Journal* completes the subscription year for 1984 memberships in the North Carolina Folklore Society. The next number will be a special double issue, Volume 33, dated 1985-86. It will be published in early summer and will include the autobiography of Avery County-native and noted country western musician Scotty Wiseman.

The mailing label on this issue includes a date marking the expiration of your membership in the North Carolina Folklore Society. Memberships for 1985 have been extended through 1986 because of the combined dating of our next special double issue. To renew your membership, please send a \$6 check to the North Carolina Folklore Society, c/o Department of English, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608. If necessary, include correction of your mailing label.

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WISEMAN'S VIEW: *The Autobiography of Skyland Scotty Wiseman*



North Carolina State Library
Raleigh, N.C.

by Scott G. Wiseman

Introduction by William E. Lightfoot

North Carolina Folklore Journal 33:1-2 (1985-86)

THOMAS McGOWAN, editor
NORMA FARTHING MURPHY, illustrator

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WISEMAN'S VIEW: *The Autobiography of Skyland Scotty Wiseman*



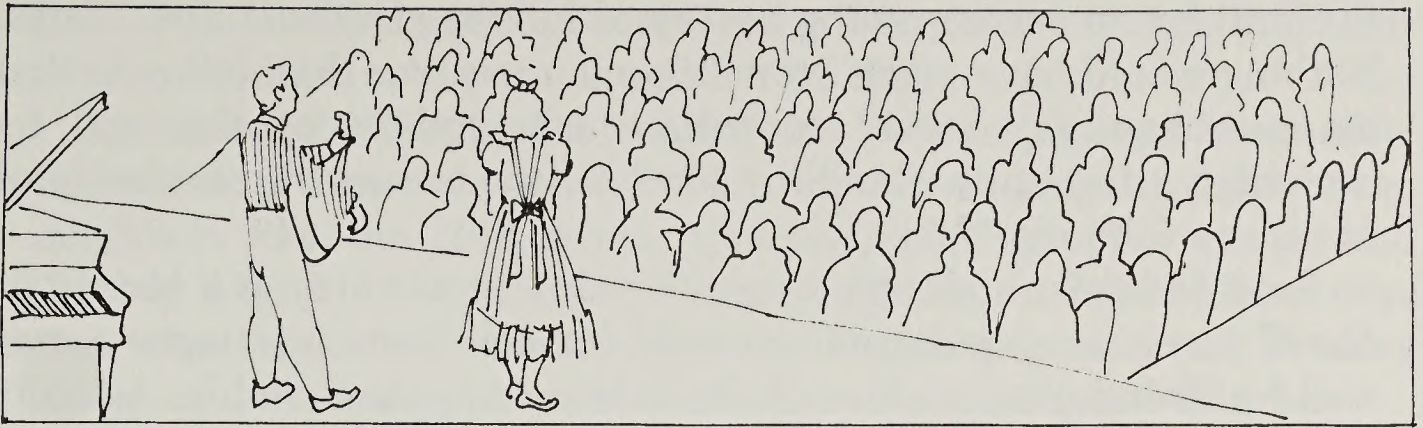
by Scott G. Wiseman

Introduction by William E. Lightfoot

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Introduction

by William E. Lightfoot

There is a wonderful place on Linville Mountain in western North Carolina, where an observer may peer deep into a gorge formed by the Linville River below or gaze to the east upon miles and miles of mountains beyond Brown Mountain, which stretches directly in the distance between Table Rock and Hawk's Bill. This place is named Wiseman's View for Josiah Layfayette ("Uncle Fate") Wiseman, who used to stop there frequently to enjoy the view decades ago as he drove his cattle to pasture from Ingalls to Conally's Cove.¹ Uncle Fate is believed the source of a story explaining the existence of the mysterious Brown Mountain Lights that have puzzled people for several generations. According to this legend, the lights emanate from a lantern swung by the ghost of a loyal slave who continues to search for his long-lost master.² Fate was the grandson of William Edward Wiseman, one of Avery County's earliest settlers, and a great-uncle of Scott Wiseman, who composed a well-known song about the famous lights.³ Scott, with his wife Lulu Belle, shared in song the Wiseman view of life on the "Cliffs of Linville" with millions of Americans for well over twenty-five years, projecting an image of the region so appealing that they eventually became the most popular folk/country act on the nation's most popular country music radio program, the WLS National Barn Dance.⁴

Lulu Belle and Scotty were among the forerunners of those whom Archie Green calls "gifted performers from folk society who, during the 1920s and 1930s, moved to the glowing realm of recording studio, radio station, and publisher's office...[and who would make] the journey from music at the family hearth to music beamed by space satellite."⁵ Green points out that biographical studies of such active bearers of tradition have proven especially productive in the attempt

to construct an encompassing history of folksong in the United States. Nothing would have made Scott Wiseman prouder than to know that his autobiography would contribute substantially to this end by becoming a fast, firm “building block in the to-be-written history of American folksong.”⁶

Scott Wiseman’s autobiography is valuable not only as a history of one of American popular music’s most famous duets; it is important as well for its insights into turn-of-the-century Appalachian life. As Scott describes his nurture he gives a unique inside view—an emic, yet nearly ethnographic look—into the particulars of day-to-day life in the North Carolina mountains. Rather than a narrative of self-promotion, Scott’s autobiography is a deeply personal, conscious act of remembering and reporting the way things were. Consequently, we are shown an authentic picture of such aspects of mountain life as agriculture, foodways, education, and recreation, including, of course, folk musical traditions. In a discussion of haymaking, Scott shows his feelings about growing up in the mountains:

I can remember when every meadow from one end of the valley to the other was dotted with . . . old-fashioned haystacks. This was a mighty pretty scene, specially in autumn when woods on the mountainsides were brilliant with fall leaf color and here and there was a field of wigwam type corn shocks with yellow pumpkins round about on the ground.

The narrative becomes not only a reliable description, but a celebration of a pastoral mountain past. This attitude, this *view*, went on to inform the substance of the Lulu Belle and Scotty “myth,” the image of a beautiful and blissful Appalachian way of life that the team presented to America through radio, recordings, films, songbooks, and innumerable personal appearances from 1934 until Scott’s death in 1981.

In addition to his autobiography Scott prepared an extensive history and genealogy of the Wiseman family in which he discusses in detail his great-great-grandfather William, who was born in London in 1741.⁷ Sometime during the 1750s William and two friends, William Penley and William Davis, stowed away on a ship bound for Boston. After working as indentured servants to pay for their passage, the young men, like many other immigrants from the British Isles, came to western North Carolina. William eventually settled on the John’s River, near what is now Collettsville, where he married Mary Davenport in 1761. Some years later, after Mary’s death, William moved further up into the mountains, making a home in the Toe River Valley in a community that became known as Ingalls, near Spruce Pine. He married Lydia Bedford, resumed his trade as a cabinet maker, became a magistrate, and lived his life out in the valley, along with his old friends Penley and Davis, dying in 1830.⁸ William’s great-grandson Edward Guerdon Wiseman remained on the family land, marrying

Josie Etta Shields in 1893; Scott Greene Wiseman, the eighth of their twelve children, was born November 8, 1909.

In his autobiography Scott effectively outlines most of his musical influences: his mother and brothers, church choirs, singing schools, neighbors like the Hullanders, travelers, phonograph records, and "Honey Waites" Wiseman, his primary inspiration.⁹ But he glosses over two other important mentors, Bascom Lamar Lunsford and Bradley Kincaid, who both reinforced his love for Appalachian folk music.

Scott's debt to Lunsford is documented in a letter he wrote to Loyal Jones in 1973:

Mr. Lunsford certainly had an influence on my career in country music, beginning with the days when I used to read his column in the *Asheville Citizen*, "Songs and Stories of the Appalachians." During the '20s, when I was still in high school, I read his column regularly. Although I knew tunes to most of the songs, many of the verses were unknown until I clipped them from Bascom's writings and later memorized them. Some of these songs, such as "Pretty Little Pink," "On Top of Old Smokey," and others, I gave to Bradley Kincaid when he came to the Carolina Mountains looking for songs. . . .¹⁰

After Scott and Lu had established their career on WLS, they became friends with the Lunsford family, who visited them several times at their log home in Ingalls. During one of those visits Lunsford performed a song that he had put together called "Mountain Dew," about a country lawyer reporting on the trial of a moonshiner.¹¹ Scott and Lu liked the song and recorded it on February 2, 1939 (Vocalion 04690), maintaining the chorus as sung by Lunsford, but changing the verses to those that are now widely familiar.¹² Scott subsequently purchased Lunsford's interest in the song and arranged for him to collect fifty percent of its royalties during Lunsford's lifetime. "Mountain Dew" became one of Lulu Belle and Scotty's most popular songs, second only to "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?" and has been recorded by innumerable artists, most significantly Grandpa Jones, who still uses it to kick off his personal appearances with a bang.¹³

Bradley Kincaid had an even more profound effect on Scott. In another letter to Loyal Jones, Scott writes:

Bradley had a great influence on me and is largely responsible for my decision to make a career in music instead of teaching. . . . He and my brother [Earle] were roommates at Berea. After Bradley had been on radio for a few years, he came to our home in North Carolina looking for songs to add to his collection. . . . He told me that I was a good enough singer to be on radio and offered to take me back to Chicago and help me get started. While Bradley was there [Spruce Pine], he sang at the local high school. I sat in the audience enraptured with his smooth delivery, his clear voice and with the ease with which he handled himself on stage. I became a fan at once and started copying Bradley's style. . . .¹⁴

Scott goes on to analyze Kincaid's tremendous popularity:

Until Bradley brought his guitar to the studio and sang. . . there had scarcely been any "country music" on the air. It was a happy discovery that this was the entertainment people of all ages and walks of life loved to hear in their homes. . . . His fine voice, his poise, clean-cut good looks and friendly, outgoing personality helped a great deal. The Christian background and self discipline learned at Berea were great assets. His willingness to spend long hours collecting and memorizing songs and his ability to concentrate were marks of a true professional. . . .¹⁵

In terms of repertoire, performance style, appearance, and values, Scott may just as easily have been describing himself. When Scott was invited to perform on WLS in late 1932 he was in many ways, then, a reflection of Bradley Kincaid, who had left the station to pursue his highly successful career elsewhere.

Scott could not have chosen a more propitious role model. Bradley Kincaid had in 1928 established the paradigm of a nationally successful radio performer of Appalachian folksongs in Chicago on the Sears-owned WLS (World's Largest Store). Kincaid's performances of such ballads as "Barbara Allen" and "Froggie Went A-Courtin' " became enormously popular with listeners, and when he offered the public printed collections of these songs thousands were sold before they came off the presses. Sears, which had in early 1924 initiated a live "country" show called the Barn Dance simulating an old-fashioned rural hoedown, began to realize the commercial value of folk music. In order to enhance its mail-order sales to farm families, Sears began selling "Family Albums" that featured articles on the performers, instigated an Artists Bureau that coordinated personal appearances throughout the Midwest, and, to avoid charges of conflict of interest, sold WLS to *Prairie Farmer* magazine, one of the nation's leading agricultural periodicals, with the understanding that the store would continue to be a major advertiser.¹⁶ In 1932, in order to accomodate the hordes of people wanting to see their Barn Dance favorites in person, WLS moved the program to the Eighth Street Theatre in downtown Chicago and began charging admission. The Barn Dance aired twice on Saturday nights to sell-out crowds until 1957, when WLS closed the theater.

Kincaid had earlier recommended to WLS that Scott be invited to perform on the station,¹⁷ and when Bradley left to begin performing on WLW in Cincinnati, George Biggar, no doubt eager for a Kincaid-like folksinger to continue Bradley's successful relationship with listeners, wired Scott asking him to come to Chicago. (Unfortunately Scott's autobiography ends at this point. Had Scott been able to complete his narrative, he would have gone on to relate, in his characteristically modest manner, one of country music's most impressive success stories.)

It fit quite nicely in the *Prairie Farmer*/Sears/WLS scheme of things for Scott to bring what he had learned and loved about Appalachian folklife with him to Chicago in 1932. He did well in his audition and was invited to become a permanent member of the WLS group, moving from Fairmont, West Virginia, to Chicago in the spring of 1933. Lulu Belle picks up the story:

... They didn't put him on the Barn Dance at first; they put him on a fifteen-minute program in the morning, and he did the news and announced, too.

And at that time the union scale was \$60 a week. You had to join a union there, Mr. [James C.] Petrillo's [musicians'] union. And the only way that they would hire him was that if he would give *back* money to the station. So he was getting \$30 a week and giving it back to the station in order to get the job.

And my mother immediately just fell in love with him. She hadn't even met him; she just liked the way he sounded.

Scott then went with what they called the Talent Show. [WLS] would go into a town and set up talent shows with the local kids. And Scott was on that; he would entertain. . . . Somebody would go before them and select who they were going to use for the finals. That is where Scott. . . went in. . . . That first summer he was there he did that.

And he was on the radio doing news and station breaks. Then, at noon, he would have his own program for fifteen minutes. That's where my mother fell in love with him.¹⁸

The 1934 *WLS Family Album*, compiled in late 1933, has a picture of "Skyland Scotty" in plain working clothes, much like Bradley Kincaid, holding a Gibson guitar, alongside the following copy:

This smiling Carolina mountaineer has brought to WLS a great many of the old mountain songs direct from his native home in Carolina. . . . Scotty is a fine lad and you would like him just as much as you think you would. Some folks like best his song. . . "Great Granddad." Scotty's early memories are of his farm home in the "Land of the Sky" near Asheville, North Carolina, where he herded sheep over sunny meadowlands with a shaggy shepherd dog by his side, and harmonica in hand. He rode to school over mountain trails on horseback.¹⁹

The song "Great Granddad" is, along with "Homecomin' Time in Happy Valley," fundamental to the Wiseman view of what Appalachian life both was and should be. The song extols the virtues of a pioneer warrior who "said his prayers with his shotgun cocked" and who raised his twenty-one male children "rough but. . . strong." Consequently,

They grew strong in heart and hand,
A firm foundation of our land.
They made the best citizens we ever had.
We need more men like great-grand-dad.

The singer ends the song by pointing out that "Times have changed, but you never can tell;/ You might yet do half as well." It is clear that Scott was personally aligned with the song; he writes:

There is an old ballad sung in the Carolina mountains which in many ways describes William Wiseman. In fact, it may have been written by some Wiseman. . . . The ballad tells of a great granddad who had twenty-one children and who died at eighty-nine. William had twenty-one children and he was eighty-nine when he died.²⁰

Scott presents a much more idyllic picture of Appalachia in his composition "Homecomin' Time in Happy Valley," which he wrote about the time he joined WLS. He had been away from Ingalls for five years and was beginning to experience nostalgia, the "pain for home." The song describes a post-harvest church reunion attended by dozens of the singer's relatives and friends, all of whom come down a wild rose-lined path with picnic baskets "full of good eatin'," prepared to spend the day renewing relationships and singing "good old songs." The singer exclaims, "Talk about singin' and sweet communion/ Just come around to the big reunion/ Down in Happy Valley once a year."²¹ Memories of such reunions must have been among Scott's happiest; he told Lulu Belle that when he was a little boy these get-togethers would be held on the first Sunday in August: "They'd have picnics. And when the kids were younger they'd go from one to the other; sometimes they'd go to three or four in one day."²² The themes put forth in these two songs—the importance of place, family, church, hard work, having fun, "sweet communion" with friends, traditions, old-fashioned rurality—form the basis for the Wiseman view expressed in virtually all of Lulu Belle and Scotty's later work.

Scott performed the two songs back-to-back on his first recording for Bluebird (BB B-5357) on December 13, 1933. The other two on the four-side session were, not surprisingly, associated with Bradley Kincaid: "Two Little Frogs" and "Whippoorwill" (BB B-5906). Scott's version of "Frogs," also known as "Kitchie Ki-Me-O," a distant cousin of the ballad "The Frog's Courtship," was identical to Kincaid's, as was "Whippoorwill," which Kincaid recorded, before Scott, as "The First Whippoorwill Song" on September 14, 1933; Bradley reports, however, that he learned the song from Scott.²³

Scott's vocal style was very much like Kincaid's: unadorned, polished, cultivated, with lyrics well enunciated—decidedly non-"country." His guitar accompaniment featured firm chords, both open and closed, punctuated with soft bass runs. Scott played his harmonica, housed in a neck holder, simultaneously with the guitar, sticking strictly to the melody. The harmonica, which suggested a fiddle, added dimension to the vocal accompaniment, enabling Scott to sound like a small band, an effect later enhanced when Lulu Belle played guitar and Scott switched to banjo. When Scott first learned to play the banjo from "Honey Waites," he used the down-stroking (rapping, knocking, frailing) style, but as he learned more about the instrument he adapted a finger-picking style more typical of the western North Carolina banjo

tradition: the thumb remained on the drone (usually referred to as the fifth) string while the forefinger up-picked the melody, brushing down the strings in a Carter-like scratch after a phrase.²⁴ Scott was also a virtuoso whistler; his trilling style, which he called “double-barreled whistling,” added color to a good many of his slow songs.

On March 23 and 24, 1934, Scott re-recorded “Great Granddad,” “Homecomin’ Time in Happy Valley,” and “The Whipporwill Song” for the American Recording Company which issued them on the Conqueror label.²⁵ Seven other songs were recorded on this session, all of which were traditional and solidly in the Wiseman mode; no religious titles were cut, but there was an even distribution of ballads, novelty tunes, and sentimental love songs. Scott sang a version of “Darby’s Ram” that he had learned in the mountains from an old folksinger named Aunt Nancy,²⁶ and a ballad relating the story of a fistfight during which the combatants pound themselves into oblivion titled “They Fit and Fit.” This “tall tale” element also appears in “Aunt Jemima’s Plaster,”²⁷ which could cure “anything from a chill to a cough,” and “A Scolding Wife,”²⁸ who carries her “chinning music” to unbearable extremes. Still another novelty song, “Keep a Horse Shoe Hung Over the Door,” outlines several benefits of adhering to the traditional imperative of the title. The love songs are “Sweet Kitty Clyde”²⁹ and “Gathering Up the Shells from the Seashore.”³⁰ We may assume that Scott chose to record these eleven songs because of their popularity with both radio listeners and those who heard them performed live. Skyland Scotty, the Appalachian “troubadour,” as he was now called by WLS, was on his way. But no longer, as it turned out, as a solo performer.

When “Uncle” Art Satherley of ARC recorded Scott in March, 1934, he also produced the first records of a twenty-year-old woman from Boone, North Carolina, named Myrtle Eleanor Cooper. She had become popular on the Barn Dance as the character “Lulu Belle,” conceived by WLS’s John Lair as the girlfriend of Rambling Red Foley (a.k.a. “Burrhead”), a member of the Cumberland Ridge Runners. Lulu Belle was a robust singer and irrepressible comedienne who had been teamed with Foley since joining the Barn Dance in late 1932. Foley, however, had married Eva Overstake, a member of the Three Little Maids, in August, 1933, and Eva looked with disfavor on her husband singing love songs to Lulu Belle.³¹ So George Biggar, once again anxious to preserve a concept that had proven successful, called Scott and Lulu Belle into his office and informed them that they were to “work up an act” immediately.

Lulu Belle remembers her first impressions of Scott:

Scott was just out of school. He had a white shirt on, and a necktie, and his hair neat. I hadn’t seen anybody like that down at the Barn Dance. Just

out of college. I thought he was very stuck-up. And he told everybody he was married and had five kids, which was all right. He was trying to keep the girls off; he wasn't interested in girls at that time. He had a girl in West Virginia. So Mom kept talking about him. And I told her I thought he was stuck-up. And she said, "Why don't you just drop by the studio? Why don't you go down there this afternoon and pretend like you're going to pick up your mail and go up and talk to him?" Mom "sicked" me on him: a "terrible" thing for her to do! And so I did! And we went to breakfast a couple of times after that. . . .

And then I told the Artists Bureau that I'd like to have him on my road show, because I was headlining the show and I liked Scott. And so they put Scott on my show and then the courtin' began. And I rode with him in his car that summer [1934]. And he'd sing little songs like "Honey, Are You Making Any Money?" And I took it seriously. I thought, "Is he trying to ask me to marry him?" Naive? You don't know what naive is. Scott and I got married, then, on December 13, 1934.³²

During the summer and fall of 1934, Lu and Scott worked on their act as well as their friendship. It was natural, perhaps, that the first song they performed on what had now become the National Barn Dance was the old English courting song "Madam, I've Come to Marry You." The team was an immediate hit with audiences, and at once Skyland Scotty and the Belle of the Barn Dance became the Hayloft Sweethearts and, later, the Sweethearts of Country Music.

"Madam" was among the six songs Lu and Scott chose for their first recording session for ARC on October 30, 1935. The other five were also love songs: "Sugar Babe," "Tildy Johnson," "Get Along Home, Cindy," "The Farmer's Daughter," and "Prisoner at the Bar," an oddly intense ballad sung with grave urgency.³³ Similar songs, with the addition of gospel tunes and the immortal "Mountain Dew," were featured on the team's second session on February 2 and 10, 1939.

The complete story of Lulu Belle and Scotty's career of course deserves much more attention than would be appropriate here. Compressed, it remains to be pointed out that the Hayloft Sweethearts continued to express with bright enthusiasm the myth generated by the Wiseman view. Lu's image was that of a gum-chewing "aw-shucks" hillbilly wife, impertinent but ultimately devoted to her husband. Scott came across as a loving, four-square benedict emotionally fused to his Appalachian home. Their act consisted of *Hee Haw*-like cornball comedy, gospel tunes, "heart" songs, and folksongs, all presented in the idiom of an Appalachian family string band capable of transcendently beautiful harmony singing. Here were two genuinely happy young people who fortified their position as emblems of idyllic rurality by displaying, both visually and aurally, a perfect example of "sweet communion." Scott never lost sight of the values inherent in "Great-Grandad"; in the introduction to *Lulu Belle's and Scotty's Happy Valley Songs*, their third songbook, Scott writes:

During the past six years Lulu Belle and I have had the pleasure of tracking down and bringing back to radio listeners many half forgotten Early American Songs. . . . We like to think of our "Little Pine Log Cabin" in the Carolina mountains as the symbol of our hopes and ambitions. . . . If we can impart to the young-folks a portion of our great admiration for the simple life and the rugged patriotism of our pioneer forefathers, then we are truly grateful for radio as a great and good influence in this glorious land of ours.³⁴

Mention should also be made of two of the duet's biggest hits, "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?" and "Remember Me." "Lately," one of the most popular country songs of all time, had a truly romantic origin. According to Lulu Belle,

Scott wrote it in the hospital; he had a spell of colitis and was in the hospital in Chicago for about a month. I would go up to see him every day. And I had heard the expression somewhere "Have I told you lately that I love you?"—it was an expression, you know. And as I started to leave I turned around and said that to him. And the next day I went up there and he had written this song.³⁵

"Lately" has been recorded by dozens of artists ranging from Gene Autry and Bing Crosby to Ricky Nelson and Elvis Presley, but no one performs it as warmly as Lu, who tells its story before singing it during her fairly rare personal appearances.³⁶

"Remember Me (When the Candle Lights Are Gleaming)," another country music classic, had an equally poignant genesis:

When asked what inspired "Remember Me," Scott said that when he and Lulu Belle were living in Cincinnati, Ohio, he was driving along in his car and nostalgia for Avery County overwhelmed him. He remembered a blue and white china cup and saucer with the fancy lettering "Remember Me," which sat on the dresser of the guest room of his parents' house. He and the other children were not allowed to touch the cup and saucer, and Scott gathered that it was a memento of his parents' courtship. When asked what he thought the song's appeal was, Scott answered, "The need to get back to simplicity—songs have been too sophisticated—we need to get back to simple, honest songs. When I wrote it the song wasn't a big hit, and a friend remarked, 'Scott, it's too far ahead of its time.'"³⁷

Like Proust's *la petite madeleine* the image of the cup and saucer opened a floodgate of memories in Scott's consciousness that resulted in one of his most endearing compositions.

In 1957 WLS closed the old Eighth Street Theatre and the Barn Dance began to fade away. Lu and Scott, who had somehow found time to earn an M.A. in speech from Northwestern University, decided that it was time to return for good to their Carolina mountain home. While they never completely retired from show business, the Wisemans spent most of their time farming, gardening, tending their Angus cattle, and enjoying their children, Linda and Steve, picnicking frequently at Wiseman's View. Nor did Scott abandon songwriting:

He'd be out working in the field with the cattle or something and he'd come

in and wouldn't say a word to me, just march right on through the house. . . into the bedroom and he'd close the door and I'd hear the guitar, him picking out a melody. . . .³⁸

Scott's talents as a songwriter were rewarded in 1971 when he was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Association's Hall of Fame. Lu reports that Scott also provided invaluable support in her two terms in the North Carolina General Assembly from 1975 to 1978.

During the late sixties and seventies Scott devoted considerable time to the Wiseman genealogy and family history as well as his autobiography, which he would send in segments to his daughter Linda, who typed them and added them to the present manuscript. Scott's work was interrupted on January 31, 1981, when he suffered a massive heart attack in Gainesville, Florida, on his way to Ingalls. He is buried at Pine Grove Methodist Church near the Wiseman land, the site of Scott's most memorable homecoming times.³⁹

Linda Wiseman Johnston remembers often seeing her father reading the *North Carolina Folklore Journal*. As "Skyland Scotty" Wiseman was an early and forceful champion of North Carolina folk traditions, it is deeply satisfying that his autobiography be presented in these pages.⁴⁰

NOTES

1. Scott Wiseman discusses Uncle Fate and other ancestors in his essay "Wisemans Settled Toe River Valley" in the Avery County Bicentennial Commission's *Avery County Heritage: Biographies and Genealogies* (Newland, N.C.: Puddingstone Press, 1976), p. 231.

2. For a completely different version of the legend, see Charles Bond, "Unpublished Folklore in the Brown Collection," in *Readings in American Folklore*, ed. Jan Harold Brunvand (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), pp. 13-15.

3. Scott's ballad "The Brown Mountain Light" can be heard on *Lulu Belle and Scotty: The Sweethearts of Country Music* (Starday SLP 206).

4. For a brief survey of the duet's career, see Wayne C. Daniel, "Lulu Belle and Scotty: 'Have I Told You Lately that I Love You?'," *Bluegrass Unlimited*, 20 (1986), 70-76.

5. Archie Green, Introduction, *Radio's "Kentucky Mountain Boy," Bradley Kincaid*, by Loyal Jones (Berea, Ky.: Berea College Appalachian Center, 1980), p. 1.

6. Green, p. 2.

7. The source of this and the following information is a 111-page unpublished manuscript prepared by Scott entitled simply "Wiseman Genealogy," pp. 6 ff.; permission to consult this manuscript was graciously given by Lulu Belle Wiseman Stamey and her husband Ernest Stamey, both of whom provided assistance in the preparation of this study.

8. The old patriarch's grave is on the east side of Highway 19E, a few yards north of Beam's Restaurant near Spruce Pine, N.C.

9. Honey Waites's real name was "Waitesell," probably derived from Waightstill Avery, a Revolutionary War hero after whom Avery County is named.

10. Letter from Scott Wiseman to Loyal Jones, dated December 3, 1973, made available to me by Professor Jones. For more information on Lunsford, see Jones's *Minstrel of the Appalachians: The Story of Bascom Lamar Lunsford* (Boone, N.C.: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1984).

11. Lunsford's version of "Mountain Dew," which he recorded for Brunswick in the late '20s, can be heard on Marimac [Cassette] Recording No. 9104, *The Cold-Water Pledge, Vol. 1*. See also W.K. McNeil's comments on the song in the tape's companion booklet, pp. 1-2. There is good evidence that the song is traditional; see "The Hidden Still" in *Folk Songs from North Carolina*, ed. Henry M. Belden and Arthur Palmer Hudson, III of *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1952) [hereafter cited as *Brown III*], p. 72, and Grandpa Jones's comments in *Everybody's Grandpa*, by Louis "Grandpa" Jones with Charles K. Wolfe (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), p. 111.

Lulu Belle told me the story of "Mountain Dew" during one of several taperecorded interviews conducted in her home in Ingalls, the most important of which occurred on June 7, 1982; May 30 and October 20, 1984; and August 18 and September 30, 1985. Transcriptions of these interviews have been arranged in historical sequence in an unpublished manuscript deposited in the Country Music Foundation Archives in Nashville, Tennessee (hereafter cited as the Lulu Belle Wiseman manuscript); Lu discusses "Mountain Dew" on pp. 46-48 of this manuscript.

12. The Wiseman rendition of "Mountain Dew" can be heard on Old Homestead's excellent re-issue album *Lulu Belle and Scotty: Early and Great, Volume 1* (OHCS-168), released in 1985. Ironically, Scott and Lu were not allowed by WLS to perform the song on the radio due to the squeaky-clean image the station wished to convey to listeners.

13. "Mountain Dew" (King 624, cut on March 28, 1947), Grandpa Jones's first major hit, was the first recording on which Grandpa played his frailing banjo style. Grandpa learned the song from Scott, but, in keeping with the folk process, added some verses to it that he and Merle Travis made up; see Jones and Wolfe, pp. 111-12.

14. Jones, *Kincaid*, pp. 59-60.

15. Jones, *Kincaid*, p. 66.

16. Sears' actions are outlined in Jack Hurst, "Barn Dance Days: Chicago's National Barn Dance," *Bluegrass Unlimited*, 20 (1986), 57-58. For a much fuller discussion of the Sears/WLS/*Prairie Farmer* combine, see James F. Evans, "*Prairie Farmer*" and WLS: *The Burrige D. Butler Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969).

17. Jones, *Kincaid*, p. 60.

18. Lulu Belle Wiseman manuscript, pp. 4-5.

19. *WLS Family Album: 1934* (Chicago: *Prairie Farmer* Publishing, 1933), p. 17. This booklet as well as several other important materials were made available to me by the John Edwards Memorial Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Dan Patterson was especially helpful.

In the WLS literature the station takes credit for dubbing Scott "Skyland Scotty," as he came from "The Land of the Sky." Scott had the name long before coming to Chicago, however. In a front-page article in the September 24, 1931 edition of *The Columns*, the Fairmont Teachers College student newspaper, Scott is mentioned as having been elected president of the senior class; the piece goes on to say that "Wiseman is one of the most outstanding students in school and is known throughout the nation as a radio entertainer. He broadcasts as "Skyland Scotty" from station WMMN, and has won fame with his rendition of mountain ballads of the Carolinas." I have this and many other documents from Debby Gray of Berea, Kentucky, a long-time fan and student of Lulu Belle and Scotty who has been of great help to me in my work on the team.

20. Both the lyrics and Scott's comments are in the "Wiseman Genealogy," p. 21. The song may be heard on Old Homestead-168, cited above.

There is a similar version in *Folk Ballads from North Carolina*, ed. Henry M. Belden and Arthur Palmer Hudson, II of *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1952) [hereafter cited as *Brown II*], p. 621. A 1946 performance by the Blue Sky Boys is included in the Library of Congress album *Songs of War and History* (LBC 10), ed. Richard K. Spottswood. As much as Scott would have liked to think that the ballad was about William Wiseman, both of these sources indicate that "Great Grand-dad" was originally a cowboy song. Scott thought of it as an "Appalachian" song, of course, and whatever its origin it works quite well as such.

21. On Old Homestead-168. This is the first song in *Lulu Belle's and Skyland Scotty's Homefolk Songs* (Chicago: Rayner, Dalheim, 1937), pp. 2-3, their first songbook. The cover shows the couple in down-home clothes in front of a one-room log house, complete with dogs, chickens, and banjo-picker, with blue mountains in the background.

22. Lulu Belle Wiseman manuscript, p. 1.

23. On "Frogs" see *Brown III*, pp. 165-66. See also Jones, *Kincaid*, p. 110-11 and 162; the text printed here matches Scott's exactly. Kincaid's "Whippoorwill" may be heard on *Maple on the Hill and Other Old Time Country Favorites* (RCA-Camden CAS 898 [e]); Scott's is on *Lulu Belle and Scotty: Sweethearts Still* (Starday SLP351).

24. Banjoist Harry Cagle demonstrated Scott's style to me on May 17, 1984, in Glenville, N.C. Mr. Cagle, who used to perform with the Wisemans, was given one of Scott's banjos by Lu.

25. Discographical as well as other useful information on the Wisemans was obtained at the Country Music Foundation Archives in Nashville; Bob Pinson, Ronnie Pugh, John Rumble, and Charlie Seemann were particularly helpful.

26. Scott discusses the ballad and Aunt Nancy in his article "George Washington Liked Good Old Mountain Music," *Rural Radio*, 1 (1938), 4-5. See also *Brown II*, pp. 439-40.
27. *Brown II*, pp. 628-29.
28. *Brown II*, pp. 478-79.
29. *Brown II*, pp. 476-77; see also *Brown III*, pp. 293-96 for the "Kitty Kline" complex, a close relative.
30. Scott probably learned "Shells" from the Carter Family's 1932 recording of "Happiest Days" (Victor 23686).
31. Rambling Red and Lulu Belle recorded four songs together for ARC on the same March, 1934 session during which Scott recorded the ten songs discussed above. Red and Eva had been married seven months when Red and Lu sang two love songs, "Hi Rinktum Inktum Doodee" and the very beautiful "Going Out West This Fall."
32. Lulu Belle Wiseman manuscript, pp. 33-34.
33. These six songs have all been re-issued on Old Homestead 168. "Madam" is part of the "A Paper of Pins" series; see *Brown III*, pp. 6-24. For "Sugar Babe" see *Brown III* pp. 550-51. In John Lair's *The 100 WLS Barn Dance Favorites* (Chicago: M.M. Cole, 1935), p. 33, there is a text performed by "Burrhead and Lulubelle," "written" by Lair, that contains the same verses as sung by the Wisemans. "Tildy" is one of Bradley's; see Jones, *Kincaid*, p. 162. For "Cindy" see *Brown III*, pp. 482-85. Both "Daughter," also known as "Lueller," a solo vehicle for Lu, and "Prisoner" seem non-traditional.
34. The booklet was published in Cincinnati by Lulu Belle and Scotty in 1940.
35. Lulu Belle Wiseman manuscript, p. 49.
36. The Wisemans recorded the song numerous times on different labels; the most accessible version is on *Lulu Belle and Scotty: Have I Told You Lately (that I love you)* (Old Homestead 90037). Lu believes that the song has been recorded by over 100 artists and that total sales of the record are in the neighborhood of ten million.
37. This story is from an undated clipping from "a Spruce Pine paper upon the release of *Red-Headed Stranger*" in the files of Debby Gray. Willie Nelson's *Stranger*, which pumped fresh blood into the song, was released in July, 1975; the paper could have been either the *Mitchell Journal* or the *Tri-County News* (now the *News Journal*); attempts to locate the precise source have proven unsuccessful. A similar version of the story is printed in Dorothy Horstman's *Sing Your Heart Out, Country Boy* (New York: Pocket Books, 1976), p. 191.
- Bill Malone chose "Remember Me" for inclusion in *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music*, issued in 1981.
38. Lulu Belle Wiseman manuscript, p. 5.
39. While reminiscing about the church, which is located near the intersection of Highway 19E and Mullein Hill Road in Ingalls, Scott told Dave Wylie that "We youngsters always looked forward to the annual homecoming. . . . On that day they decorated the graves in the cemetery and had a great picnic in the grove. I was thinking of this when I wrote 'Homecoming Time in Happy Valley'." This remark is in the liner notes to *Just a Closer Walk With Thee* (Birch Records 1948).
40. Phone conversation with Ms. Johnston on August 3, 1986.

I wish to express appreciation to the Appalachian State University Graduate School, College of Arts and Sciences, and Department of English for grants and released time that facilitated my work on this study.



Formal publicity photograph of Scott Wiseman, Chicago, 1934. Photo by Theatrical Studio Chicago.



Lulu Belle bewilders Scotty in this 1935 WLS publicity shot. Photograph by Theatrical Studio Chicago.



Publicity shot of Scott and Lulu Belle in Chicago, 1936. The WLS press release reads: "Two years after meeting on the National Barn Dance, Lulu Belle crushed the hard shell of Scotty's indifference. Her persistence [*sic*] finally won for her a devoted husband. They were married in 1935." Photo by Theatrical Studio Chicago.



Cover of first songbook by Lulu Belle and Scott (1937). Photograph by Michael Rominger.



Honey Waites Wiseman visits Lulu Belle on porch of the Wisemans' "little pine log cabin" at Ingalls, N.C., during the mid-thirties. Photograph by Scott Wiseman.



Lu and Scott perform for the troops at Fort Custer, Michigan, in 1942.
Photograph by Syndicate Press Photo.



WLS publicity shot of Scott and Lulu Belle with their children, Steven and Linda Lou, Chicago, 1943. The press release reads: "This time it's Mommy gets the worm. Two-year old Stevie, son of WLS National Barn Dance stars, Lulu Belle and Scotty, uncovers a small angleworm while helping Mother and Daddy Wiseman in the family's victory garden. Lulu Belle and Scotty get a good giggle out of Stevie's find, but Linda Lou, their seven-year old daughter, pays no heed to her little brother's discovery."



Wiseman WLS *Family Album* photograph, 1951. Photograph by Maurice Seymour Studios.



The Wiseman family in a hayfield at Ingalls, N.C., 1952.



Scott at work in his office in Evanston, Illinois, in the mid-fifties.



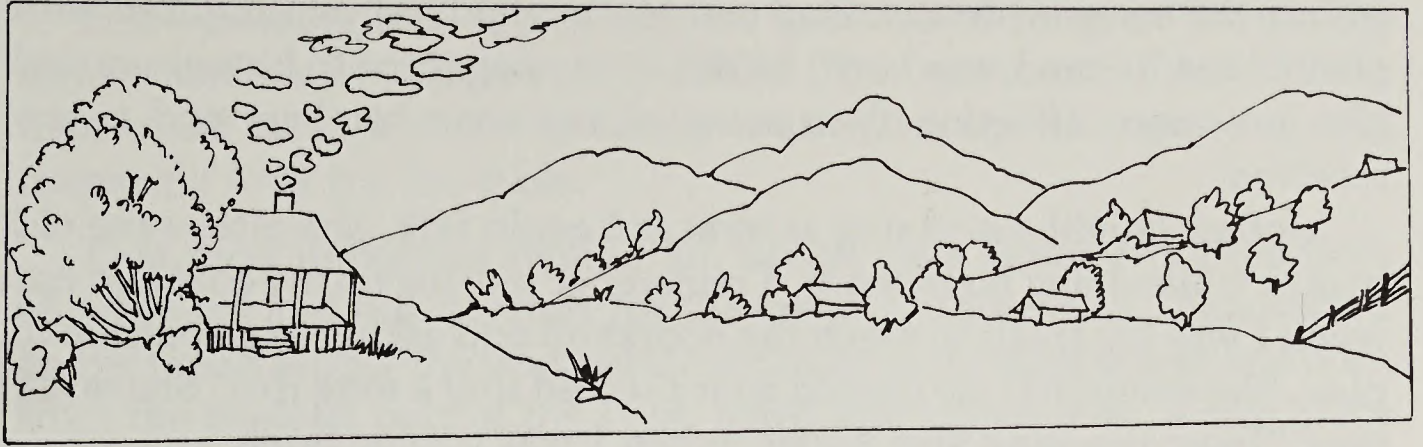
Lulu Belle and Scott take their turn on the National Barn Dance in its thirty-fifth year at the Eight Street Theatre in Chicago, 1956. The bass player is a WLS staff musician. Arkie the Arkansas Woodchopper and Grace Wilson chat in the background.



Scott receives his Hall of Fame award from the National Association of Songwriters in Nashville, 1971.



Scott and Bashful Brother Oswald (Beecher Kirby) sign autographs at the Eighth Annual Fan Fare in Nashville, 1979. Photo by Les Leverett, WSM.



WISEMAN'S VIEW

by Scott G. Wiseman

[Editor's note: Copy text for *Wiseman's View* is 106 8½ by 11-inch pages of typescript copied in installments by Linda Johnston, Mr. Wiseman's daughter, from originals typed by him. This manuscript is titled simply "Scott G. Wiseman," which is centered and underlined atop the first page. The title *Wiseman's View*, chapter divisions and chapter headings have been provided by the editor. A few substantive changes from the typescript have been made to correct clear errors; they are marked with brackets. The typescript itself was carefully done and contains some inked corrections apparently in Mr. Wiseman's hand. The accidentals of the manuscript have been kept except for silent changes caused by revisions in comma use, a few corrections of spellings and changes in word division, and the breaking of a few long paragraphs in two. No attempt has been made to regularize word division and use of hyphens. *Wiseman's View* is published with the permission of Lulu Belle Wiseman Stamey, who also gave gracious help to its preparation.]

Growing Up in the Country

It was the year 1909 when I was born on a farm in the mountains of western North Carolina. To know what life was like at that place and time, one must realize that this was a remote part of southern Appalachia. Communications and roads were so primitive that it was like living in colonial America before the Revolutionary War.

My first memories are of riding in a two-horse buggy with my mother and oldest brother. I was dressed in my Sunday best, a little imitation fur coat, which was red with white cuffs and collar, similar to what Santa Claus wears these days. I enjoyed riding in the buggy so much that I refused to get out when we arrived at home, and my big brother would persuade me by pretending to cry because I would not

go into the house with him. Dad and Mother had lost two children with pneumonia before I was born, no doubt causing them to humor me and give me more affection than some of my nine brothers and sisters received.

Mother taught me to sing as soon as I could talk. She often sang old hymns while doing housework. I remember putting on my coat and hat when I was too small to reach the doorknob and asking to go outside to play. She would tell me I could go if I would sing a song first. She says I sang "Jesus Washing Sins Away" when I was two or three.

The house in which we lived during my childhood was quite unusual. It was not a log house, as were many others in our valley. It was the type of American home which followed the log cabin in many parts of the country, being what was called a "boxed" house—boards nailed vertically with other boards used to cover the cracks. This house had four rooms on the ground floor, a sleeping loft in the attic, and a basement with a fireplace. What made the house unusual was our water supply. It was built over a spring on the side of a gentle hill so that the spring and spring-box were in the basement. At one time there was a water bucket and windlass on the back porch so that water could be drawn up to the ground floor without making the trip to the basement. This was considered a great blessing in those days when almost nobody had running water inside the house.

Cold water from the spring flowed through a long shallow trough on one side of the big basement room and out through a crude wooden tile made from a hollow log on the downhill side of the house. This long shallow trough was our only refrigerator. There were kept large stone crocks of milk on which yellow cream stood an inch thick, especially in summer when grass was lush and cows heavy with milk. Other crocks contained round cakes of yellow butter "molded" in wooden molds, melons from Dad's melon patch, fried chicken, home baked pies, and home-cured ham, especially when a church picnic was coming up and food was prepared in advance. This was also the storage spot for kettles of leftover dry or green beans and other vegetables to be eaten later.

One of my early embarrassing disasters happened when I undertook to carry a two-gallon stone crock of milk to the spring-box. There was no stairway inside the house. We went outside and walked down two sets of steps to enter the basement by an outside door. At eight or ten, I could barely lift the big crock but was determined to prove my strength. Unfortunately, my foot slipped off the bottom step and I tumbled headfirst into the broken crock, getting an unwanted milk bath as well as an ego-crushing lesson. My older sister twitted me a bit, but Mother put a stop to that. "You needed a bath anyhow," she said. Soon I was in the back room with the tin wash tub.

It is commonplace to say that we grew everything we ate on the farm where we lived in the early 1900's. The facts are that much of the time of all members of the family was taken up with growing and preparing food for the table.

That most important item of all, bread, now comes from the store all wrapped and sliced, ready for the table. In those days, Dad started on the bread supply the year before when he saved seed wheat and corn from the choicest part of the field, dried and stored it in a safe place until planting time. He plowed the wheatfields in the fall with a team of horses and a single mold-board plow. Think how long it took to plow an acre with a plow that cut a twelve- or fourteen-inch furrow each trip across the field. Then it was harrowed smooth with an "A-frame" harrow, a triangle of heavy timbers bolted together, with steel teeth driven through auger holes around its edge. The grain was then sown by hand from a pail and harrowed into the soil. In our mountains we usually planted winter wheat because the summer growing season was shorter than in the lowlands. It was sown according to the moon, on the first full moon in October, which was ordinarily a dry, dusty time. There was a well-known rule they followed, "Dust in wheat and mud in oats." Oats were sown in the springtime when the ground was usually wet and soggy.

The winter wheat came up and turned the fields to green in the early winter but grew very slowly during cold weather. If we had lots of snow to cover the fields during the coldest weather, folks would say it would be a good wheat year. When warm, damp spring weather came along, wheat and rye grew rapidly. By the first of July, the heads began to turn to gold, and it was soon ready to cut. We knew that if you waited until it was too ripe, the grain would shatter out of the heads during harvesting and be lost. For that reason, it was cut in what was called the "dough" stage, meaning that the inside of the grain was doughy in consistency.

Until I was about ten or twelve years old, grain in our valley was cut with what they called a "cradle." This was a rather heavy scythe with four or five slender wooden "fingers" parallel and above the blade. When the blade was swung in a semicircle to cut the grain close to the ground, the fingers held the stalks straight with their heads in the same direction. The cradler raked them off in a neat pile with his left hand (if he was right-handed). This enabled a man or boy to follow behind the cradler and tie the grain into sheaves or bundles. This required practice and skill for both operations. The tie man gathered several piles into enough for a sheaf, tucked them under his left arm, pulled a few of the longest stalks with his right hand, wrapped them around the bundle, gave them a twist and tucked them under so that they held the

sheaf together. A strong man was needed for the job of cradling. It fell to my lot to be a tie boy, and somehow I could scarcely keep up with Dad and his cradle. Often there were briars among the wheat stalks, which created a problem because it was almost impossible to tie with gloves [on] one's hands.

Dad was a tall, powerful cradler in his day, one of the best in the valley and delighted in going so fast that hardly any tie man could keep up. On one occasion he met his match. A short, wiry man by the name of Cain Twiggs brought his family and moved into one of the small tenant houses on our farm. He was built close to the ground and did not look too powerful. [He] was not especially fast at other farm work, but Dad had a surprise when he took Mr. Twiggs to the field as his tie man that day. At noon he came in for "dinner" ringing wet with sweat complaining that "that Twiggs stayed right on my tail all morning long. He stayed so close I was afraid I'd cut him down like a wheat straw when I swung my blade around behind me. Guess I'll have to get to the field before he does and cut down a full swath before he starts tying."

After the grain was cut and tied into sheaves, we followed through the fields picking up the bundles and setting them up into "shocks." This was done by leaning six or eight sheaves together heads up, then bending a sheaf in the middle and pressing it down over the top of the shock to keep the rain off. If there was a strong wind afterward, we had to pick up and re-shock what was blown down.

Two or three weeks after this, the grain was dry enough to be hauled to the threshing yard. There a foundation of poles or wooden rails was laid around a pole stuck in the ground, and the bundles of grain arranged in a round stack eight or ten feet high, with the heads of grain against the pole in the center. This had to be done carefully with a certain slope so that rain water would run off the stack and not seep in to spoil the grain. Occasionally, in case of a long rainy spell, this happened anyhow and grain supplies were short in our valley that year.

An event all the boys in our valley looked forward to each year was the coming of the traveling threshing crew. In those days they came up the dirt road each summer from nearby farms with three teams of horses or sometimes oxen. One team pulled the wood-fired steam engine, one the threshing machine, and another a wagon with tools and supplies. The family had been told when they were coming, and Mother usually got together with neighbor women or hired kitchen help to cook the big meals the threshing crew expected. Dad would send word out to get extra hands there to help feed the machine, stack the straw, and haul the sacks of grain to the crib or barn where it was stored.

Stacking straw as it was spewed out of the big red machine was sweaty, dusty work. Only the youngest and toughest could stand it for long, and sometimes they had to be "spelled" for a short rest period. Lots of times everyone was glad when a belt broke or the big black one-lung steam engine had to be stopped for repairs. During these interludes there was yarn spinning, bantering and joking among the men, horseplay and wrestling matches among the boys. If they found a blacksnake among the straw stacks and a girl chanced to come by on her way to the post office down the road, boys chased her and threatened to toss it on her just to hear her yell.

It was the job of the younger boys to carry water to the threshing yard for the crew to drink. This was no small job, for grain threshing always took place during the hottest weather of the year, and it seemed nobody could drink as much water as a crew of ten or twelve men around a threshing machine. If the spring or well was a half mile away, our bare feet made many trips with buckets and dippers in our hands.

When noon came at the threshing yard, the man who fired the boiler would take a look at his big pocket watch, reach up and pull the string on the big gleaming brass whistle. Steam spewed over the boiler and the sound of the whistle echoed over the hills letting other farmers know it was noon and the threshing crew was in our valley. Some years as much as a hundred bushels of wheat and rye were grown and threshed on our farm. This meant that the threshing crew stayed an average of two days, if there were no breakdowns of machinery and we had good weather. On one occasion I remember that they had so much trouble they stayed almost a week at our farm. We youngsters were delighted at having so much company for so long a time, but it must have been a problem for Mother and her kitchen help, as well as a burdensome expense for Dad.

After threshing was done, we could forget about the wheat, buckwheat, and rye for a time. In the meantime we were busy with hay and corn, which was the main source of feed for hogs, horses, and cattle, as well as corn bread and hominy for the table.

Corn required even more labor to grow and harvest than small grain. In winter all the stables for cows, sheep, and horses were kept dry and warm by covering the floor with a layer of straw or leftover hay. This produced loads of manure in the stalls to be hauled out on the fields in late winter and early spring. Forking up this with pitchforks, hauling it out on wagons and sleds, spreading it over the fields where we planned to grow corn was backbreaking work. After we boys were about twelve it was part of our job to help haul. As soon as spring weather permitted, this was plowed under the harrowing to prepare

for corn planting [to begin]. The old rule was to plant corn when the dogwoods were in bloom, which in our area usually happened about May first. A grown man was needed to handle a turning plow, and they took pride in handling a good steady team to plow so that every bit of sod was turned upside down and no green grass left showing. At the age of ten or twelve we boys would hitch up the "light" team to a harrow and soon catch up with the plowman because the harrow was much wider than the plow.

When I was in my teens we finally acquired a one-row corn planter. This was quite an object of curiosity to the neighbors who still planted by hand. To plant by the old method, Dad would hitch his gentlest horse to a bull tongue plow and "lay off" the field. This meant that the plow opened a straight furrow about five inches deep in rows about five feet apart. If the field had a slope to it, and many mountain fields were quite steep, the furrows must go around the hill and not up and down it. Folks still chuckle about a man of Swedish descent who came to live in the mountains and laid off his corn rows up and down the hill. Heavy rains washed out all his seed and started gulleys in every furrow. After the field was "laid off," if we had commercial fertilizer, the huge two hundred-pound bags were hauled to the edge of the field and opened to be carried across the field in pails and dropped in the furrows a handful at a time. One of the greetings when one farmer met another was "What do ye say, old friend?" The answer was "Plant 'em two in a hill." After the seed was dropped in hills about two feet apart, we went through the field with hoes, row by row, and covered it with dirt, pushing stones aside if the ground happened to be rocky.

When the seed corn was in the ground, we watched the weather. If we had a few showers and the temperature was mild, in two or three weeks little green blades would peep up at every hill. If floods came, some seed was washed away and some covered so deep by soil carried from high places to low ones that it would not come up. If the weather turned cold, seed lay in the ground and finally rotted unless a warm spell revived it. In this case, we went through the field again with hoes and seed, replanting what was missing in the rows. Soon after the corn was above ground, we watched for crows and ground squirrels to come and pull the young stalks and eat the seed kernel while it was still attached to the roots. The little squirrels could be caught in traps or homemade deadfalls, which used a flat rock and a wooden trigger baited with corn grain. It fell and squashed the little rodent flat as a pancake when he tried to steal the bait.

Crows were too smart for traps. They would roost in nearby woods and come into the field at the first crack of dawn to march across the field pulling up every hill of corn that showed above ground. A

scarecrow made of old clothes on a wooden frame and stuffed with straw would work for a few days sometimes. But they were wise enough to notice that it never moved and were soon pulling corn around its feet. You had to get up "soon," hide at the edge of the field before daybreak, and shoot them. One trick that worked pretty well was to shoot a couple of crows and hang them on a pole in the field. The sight of a dead crow hanging nearby in full view seemed to keep them away better than anything. They would sometimes gather in the nearby trees to caw, squawk, and call for an hour when they first saw the dead one hanging there. Dad used to say they were holding a funeral service.

It was only when corn was very young that crows and ground squirrels gave trouble. After that it was soon time for the first hoeing. There were no pre-emergence weed controllers, only hoes and one-horse cultivator plows. The cultivator had five small tines and took care of weeds between rows pretty well if the soil was soft and loamy. If there were roots, stumps or rocks in the field a double shovel plow or bull-tongue was used, which required much more time for plowing out the "balks" or areas between rows. People in those days believed that corn would not do well at all if weeds were allowed to grow near it. Three hoeings of every field was the rule, and the only way to get weeds from hills in the rows was to use a hoe and stoop to pull those that were too close to the cornstalk to be dug without injuring the corn. This was hard work and required skill along with it. In many families boys, girls, father, everyone went to the fields and worked from sunup to sunset. As one man said, "We set in with all hands and the cook" to clean up in the cornfield. It was certainly advantageous to have a large family to get this work done. When you remember that between the middle of the month of May and the middle of July we hoed and plowed every field three times, we were barely done with one hoeing until it was time for the next to begin. It was always said that you could tell who the lazy folks were and who the good farmers were by how free of weeds they kept their cornfields. The day we all looked forward to was sometime in July when we gave the corn its last hoeing and it was "laid by."

An old mountain song said: "What you gonna do when the corn's laid by?/ Lie in the shade and look at the sky." But back then when everything was done by hand there was little time to lie in the shade even if the corn had been laid by. There was hay to cut and stack, fence rails to split, posts to sharpen, fences to mend and many other jobs needing attention.

But haymaking was another story; the corn crop was maturing and would soon be ready to harvest. This was even more strenuous work than harvesting wheat or rye in many ways. In early fall, along

before the first frost, some mountain farmers started what was called "fodder pulling." They went through the fields row by row stripping the corn blades off the stalks and cutting the tops of stalks off just above the ears. Tops and blades were tied into the bundles, left to dry a few days, then hauled and stored in a barn for feed the next winter. This made fine, clean roughage for livestock and left the tough fibrous stalks to rot in the field. Nothing would eat stalks, and they made manure hauling mighty aggravatin' because they became matted together and were difficult to fork up and haul out in the spring. When it was done and stalks left standing in the field with ears near the top, it was easy to drive through with sled or wagon, strip off the ears, and haul them to the crib to be shucked or husked later.

The fodder-pulling method was more time-consuming than the method we generally used. What we did was to go through the fields when corn was mature and cut off the stalks just above the ground. Using a corn knife, which had a hickory handle about two feet long with a ten-inch blade set at an angle on one end, we grasped a stalk with the left hand, reached down with the right hand and cut it by pulling the sharp knife upward at an angle through the stalk. The stalks were built into shocks of the kind that James Whitcomb Riley and other poets likened to wigwams. With the base of the stalks on the ground and tassels upward, it was a fairly weatherproof shock which allowed the fodder to cure and the corn ears to dry before they were shucked out. It was all hard work, especially when it came to tying the shock together near its top so that it would stand up in case of strong winds. In the old days there was little or no hemp twine available for tying the shocks. A man could search out a long, limber stalk of corn, hug the shock together with his two arms like squeezing a pretty gal, then loop the tie stalk around it near the top, pull it tight, twist and tuck the ends together so that it stood up in most any kind of storm.

Some of the shocks stood in the fields until almost time for the first snowfall. They were not only colorful against the landscape; they made a good place to hide a pumpkin or a jug of corn squeezin's, after revenuers made it dangerous to have it in your house. Trouble was you sometimes lost track of which shock among the hundred or so was the hiding place. Then if you wanted a toddy you had to hitch up the team and work like the devil pulling corn ears from the stalks and hauling them to the crib until you finally found the Little Brown Jug you were looking for after you had pulled down most of the shocks and hauled in the corn and fodder.

We usually hauled the corn ears to the crib or barn loft in the shuck and did the husking at night or on rainy days when the weather was unfit for outside work. Sometimes we had a corn shuckin' of the kind that has been described in song and story, when the boy found the red

ear to kiss the prettiest girl, etc. And of course there were a few jugs of peartenin' juice circulating around among the boys in the dark corners or outside the building, especially if the night was frosty.

When the wheat and rye were in the bins and the corn in the crib, there was still lots of work to be done before it appeared on the table as "the staff of life." On a wooden box that held two or three bushels, there was a corn sheller attached at one end. When an ear of corn was fed into the hand-cranked device a spring-loaded clamp held the ear against a toothed wheel which tore the grain off and let it fall into the box. The cob was spewed out over the end of the box to the floor.

There was a milldam and a water mill down the river about three miles from our home, owned by a distant relative, another member of the Wiseman clan. Going to mill was a time-consuming trip. You waited until the corn and wheat were being ground, and if there were others ahead, you waited your turn. Then sometimes the miller was not there; you had to cross the river and hunt him up at his home about a mile away. The menfolks were always busy, so by the time I was ten, I went to mill. Dad would put me on a gentle horse on top of a sack of corn and a sack of wheat laid across the horse's back. I liked riding horseback, but this was a bit scary at first, sitting high up on the grain bags. When I arrived at the mill, I sat and called until the miller came out to help me unload. He was a typical old country miller, with white dust on his shoulders and his floppy felt hat, even in his moustache. Sometimes if the river was low during a dry spell or if he was having trouble with his mill, he was a bit grumpy. However, he was proud of his mill and the flour and meal he turned out, and of his millstones which he said "came from across the water," meaning they were imported. When you went to mill in those days, instead of charging money for the grinding, the miller took toll. He would fill his hopper with the grain, then dip out a measure for himself, an amount of toll set by local custom. Our miller was a bit grumpy but had a reputation for honest measure and fair dealing.

In going to mill we always took along clean white cotton sacks for meal and flour as well as two smaller bags. In one we brought home the bran, in the other what was called "shorts." I no longer remember what part of the grain made shorts, but it was all used for livestock feed. At the age when I first started going to mill, I was too small to lift the bags of meal or flour onto the horse when it came time to start home. If the miller was busy and another customer was there, he would help me tie the sacks together and lay them across the horse's back in a way that they were pretty well balanced in weight on either side. The road home was long and lonely. The rocky dirt track, barely wide enough for a farm wagon and team, wound through dense woods, up across steep ridges, and down into dark hollows.

On one occasion I got into trouble because one side of my load was heavier than the other. The heavy side kept hanging lower and lower in spite of the fact that I tried to keep most of my own weight on the lighter side. Then it happened! There was a thunder of wings as a big ruffled grouse took to the air beside the road; the horse shied, and my sacks of flour and meal were in the road. I stayed on the horse and came back to the bags, to try to hoist them across the horse's back. Each time I almost succeeded, the horse would move just enough to cause me to fail. After a while, almost in tears with anger and frustration, I was delighted to hear the far-off sound of a team and wagon coming my way down the road. As it turned out, the driver was a neighbor who soon had me cheered with a few kind words, loaded up again and on my way home.

All this was what was required to have "bread on the table" back in the Carolina mountains in the early part of this century. Whether it was our hearty young appetites, the long hours of work in clean, unpolluted air or the wood-burning old kitchen range used for baking it, the cornbread, biscuits, cakes and pies made from our home-grown grain tasted out of this world!

Other important items in our food supply on our mountain farm during my childhood days were dairy products. This also required a great deal of time in preparation, compared to the ready-to-eat packaged and bottled products of today. We always kept four or five cows, usually of the dual purpose type intended both to provide milk products and bring calves suitable for beef as well. It was the job of us youngsters at an early age to look after the milk cows. I can remember learning to milk them when I was so short that I scarcely needed to stoop and squat to reach the udder. In winter time they were kept in stables near the home, fed corn and hay, and milked inside. As soon as grass started growing in the springtime, it was my job, sometimes alone and sometimes with the help of a younger brother or sister, to drive the cows to pasture each morning after milking was done. The pasture was a rich cove on the side of a mountain about a mile from the house where we lived. The trail went through woods and fields as it wound up the mountainside. After a few trips, the cows knew the way and seldom strayed from the trail. An old lead cow with a bell around her neck would lead the way, and the others followed. This gave us youngsters ample time to explore the woods beside the road, especially after the cows were in the pasture and the draw bars in place to keep them in the field. It seemed that there were always so many more birds and wild things in the woods in those days. Woodpeckers and yellow hammers were always hammering away on the dead limbs, brown thrashers were scratching among the dry ground leaves; cardinals and vireos were singing among the dark shadows but always keeping out of

sight. Peewees and weaver birds were making and minding their hanging nests from slender branches. We thought their swaying in the breeze served to rock the baby birds to sleep while their mothers searched for food. Chipmunks darted off at every turn of the road, saving their chipping whistle to taunt us just as they reached the safety of their dens under rocks or logs.

Once we found a crow's nest not too high up in a tree and climbed to it. There were three baby crows there almost ready to fly. The mother bird dive bombed us, and just as we got near the nest, one young one hopped out and fell fluttering to the ground. We caught him and took him home with us. Mother told us we could keep him if we would look after him ourselves and not let him mess up the house. He made a big fuss trying to peck and bite at first. We put him in a small wire cage and fed him bread crumbs and bits of meat from table scraps. In a few days he stopped cawing and biting, and when we turned him loose, he did not try to leave. In a few weeks he was flying around the yard. When Dad, who was always the first one up in the morning, would go outside, the crow would fly down from the housetop to his shoulder looking for breakfast. Dad became quite fond of the little black bird. It often went with us to the field to work and hopped about nearby until we were ready to go to the house for lunch. Later that summer he just disappeared. We never knew whether he went to his friends or was killed.

On our trips to the cowpasture we youngsters spent a great deal of time looking for things we could eat; not that we were hungry, we just enjoyed finding wild fruits, berries, etc. and there were many of them there in season. In early spring it was mayapples, those fragrant, yellow, juicy little fruits growing just under the umbrella-like leaves of the mayapple plant in rich coves. The next to come in was the fruit that grows on the "honeysuckle" or flame azalea. It is juicy, crisp, and tender, but does not have much flavor. Then came wild strawberries, plentiful in our mountain fields. I have always wondered why a tame strawberry has never been developed with half the flavor and smell of a wild berry. They were small and required lots of time to pick, but in my opinion made the finest jam and preserves on earth.

As recent as 1938, when Lulu Belle and I came back home on vacations, I asked "Aunt" Evo Wiseman if she could find us some berries. She reckoned she could and showed up next morning at seven with seven gallon pails running over with large red wild strawberries. She asked only one dollar a gallon. I insisted that she take two dollars. How times have changed! Hardly anybody takes time to pick wild berries even for their own table any more.

After wild strawberries ripened it wasn't long until the early transparent and striped June apples came along. Folks in those days

had fruit trees of all kinds here and there all over their farms. We children knew where every variety grew and just when the first early apples were ready to eat. Sometimes we ate them too early and got the "green apple trots" as the result of our impatience. After the early apples came cherries: blackhearts, red sweet cherries, red sour cherries, and yellow Queen Annes. Dad had five or six large old sweet cherry trees in an old field on the hill above the house, near the end of the cowpasture. Those were our favorites, and you can bet we watched all spring for them to show a blush of red. Those old trees bore so many cherries that there were plenty for the birds, the squirrels, and us. Almost every time we arrived at the trees, two or three squirrels went scampering away as we approached. A few weeks later the peaches came in season. There were peach trees in several locations at different altitudes. If those in the lower places got bitten by a late spring freeze, many times those at a higher elevation survived and bore a good crop, or vice versa. Our favorite was a small freestone peach with a thin skin and very little fuzz on the outside.

No doubt the reason that there were fruit trees in so many locations was that Grandpa had encouraged tenants to come and build small cabins for them[selves] at almost every site where there was a good flowing spring and an acre of land that was fairly rich and not too steep to plow with a horse or ox. He gave them fruit and walnut trees and encouraged them to clear land for their own use. By the time I was a child most of the tenants had moved away and their cabins had fallen down, but the trees still stood and bore fruit. Folks seemed to make use of berries and fruit for table fare much more in those days. Possibly this was because, after the first fall freeze, there were no fresh fruits or vegetables available until the next spring. The supermarket and the refrigerated truck were still several decades in the future.

The varieties of apples on our farm were so numerous it is difficult even to remember all their names. Beginning in June there were early and late kinds that kept on maturing until the first hard freeze in October. Mother knew just which trees bore the ones that were good for every purpose. Some were for frying; we all liked fried apples with plenty of country butter, sugar, and biscuits for breakfast. That with a slice of lean home-cured ham was all a fellow wanted. Then there were apples just for eating out of hand. One we called "sheep nose" or banana apple was our favorite for this purpose. There were sweet apple trees from which Dad made delicious cider. He picked the best fruit, washed them, ran them through the old hand-cranked cider mill to crush them, pressed the juice with the screw-down press, set it in the spring box to cool, and it was *something* to drink, not like the sterilized kind we buy in stores.

There were apples that were suitable for canning, for baking, for jelly making, and apples for making that great favorite of farm folk, apple butter. We had a large copper kettle which must have held about thirty gallons for that purpose. We gathered apples of the suitable variety the day before. Mother usually "swapped work" or hired a neighbor woman to help prepare them. We peeled, sliced, and cored several bushels of choice apples in the morning. A fire was built under the big kettle, which hung on a tripod or sometimes sat in a crude stone and mud furnace. The women measured the apples, sugar, or molasses, and seasoning into the kettle. As soon as it was all hot, the stirring began. It had to be stirred constantly in order to keep the fruit from sticking to the kettle and to break it up into the consistency of butter. The stirrer was a five-foot pole with a slotted end prong.

On one occasion Mother had hired old Aunt Liza Denny to help "run off" the apple butter. "Aunt Lize," as everyone called her, was quite a mountain character. She could do field work just like a man, knew how to card and spin wool, knit stockings or gloves, and was quite plain-spoken on every occasion. If someone asked her how she was feeling, she usually answered, "I've still got the fork-ed end down and am ready to go." In those Victorian times this was the kind of talk no woman ever used except characters like "Aunt Lize." That day they had the apple butter fire going hot when Mother went inside the house, leaving Lize and my brother, Paul, a boy of eight or nine, to stir the apples. When she came outside a short time later, there was no one at the kettle. The boy had wandered off on some tom foolery and Lize was nowhere in sight. Mother grabbed the stirrer, but it was too late. The apple butter had already burnt and the kettle was scorched. When Lize showed up, Mother said, "Where have you been, and why did you let the apple butter ruin?" Lize said, "Well, Miz Wyman, I had an obleegement to go to myself," meaning she had a sudden call of nature. This struck Mother so funny that she soon forgot the scorched apple butter, but she never forgot the tale. She twinkled and told it on many occasions years afterward.

Dad had an orchard high up on the mountain above our house that bore fine apples suitable for keeping through the winter. He had bought some improved varieties and set them out high on the mountain in a rich cove where there were few insects and where the late spring frosts rarely killed the fruit. In fall when they were ready to pick, the only way to bring them up was in sleds. The road was too steep even for a wagon. We had a sled which was about the capacity of a farm wagon bed. This we would line with straw, pick the apples, and gently pour them in to keep from bruising them, and haul them down the mountainside to the house. In some places the road was so steep that we put a chain-lock on the runners. That is, we wrapped a log chain around

each runner several times before starting down. This would keep the sled from running into the horse's heels and causing them to bolt.

Root crops, such as potatoes, turnips, and such, could be kept in the cellar, which was a cave in a steep bank with bins and shelves around the walls. Apples kept in a cellar soon absorbed odors and tasted "earthy" when eaten. For this reason we had large bins and boxes lined with sawdust where we stored apples to keep them from freezing in wintertime. Even then not many were left by January or February.

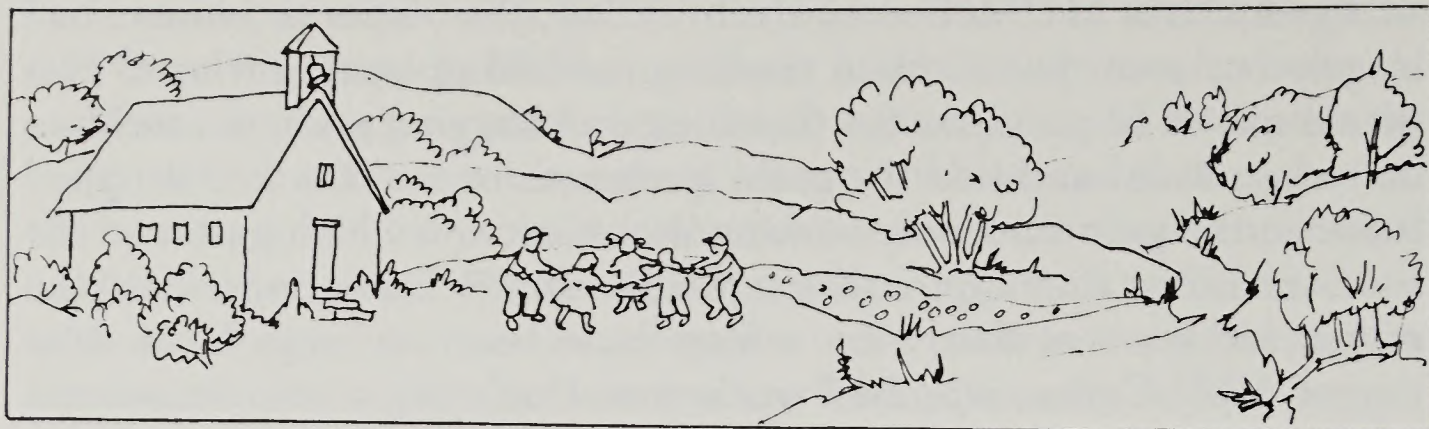
Another use made of apples in our valley was for making brandy. Not much of this was drunk at our house. Sometimes Dad and Mother both liked to mix a toddy with sugar and water on a cold morning, and they liked to have some around to offer visitors on special occasions. Dad would gather enough apples to fill four or five wooden barrels, run them through the cider mill, and put the crushed fruit or "pum-mies" (pumice) away in some out-of-the-way room at the barn to ferment. Then in early fall he would get Aith Taylor or Fate Carpenter to come down from the Buck Hill Settlement, a few miles up the valley and run off the brandy. They had to be people we could trust, because it was already illegal to make brandy, even of your own fruit, on your own property, for your own use.

A few decades earlier Grandpa had at one time run a licensed still. In those days a reliable citizen could buy a license, operate a still, have a government inspector come around and proof his product, pay tax on it and sell it legally, but not since I can remember. I am sure Dad knew how to make brandy, but he always hired someone to do it for him. In spite of his caution, he once got in trouble with the law over it. A man named Sneed, a sort of ne'er-do-well, fell out with Dad over some small argument and reported or informed on him. The revenue officers came to the house after going to the still and demolishing it. Dad was nearby working on a ditch when they arrested him. They came and told Mother they would like to search the house for whiskey. She sat on the porch and told them to go ahead and search. They would find nothing more than a dirty house. While this was going on, my older brother gathered a pile of rocks behind the corn crib and put me up to throw them at the officers. I pelted them pretty good and ran away when they came after me. They took Dad to Bakersville where his Aunt Matilda Young, who ran the local hotel, soon bailed him out. He got off for nothing more than a small fine, as I recall. Informers such as Sneed were considered the scum of the earth by most mountain people. This one lost no time in leaving for parts unknown after the above incident.

Another incident, which happened when I was ten or eleven, I still remember vividly. It was one of the only times I ever saw people shooting at each other with live ammunition.

By this time Mr. McCormick's invention, the reaper or binder, had largely replaced the old hand cradling method of cutting wheat. This machine had no provision for threshing and bagging grain as combines do today; it cut and tied the grain in sheaves or bundles and dropped them on the ground. I was working with the crew which gathered the sheaves and set them up in shocks. Dad's brother Uncle Sep owned the reaper, which was drawn by a four-horse team. A large black man named Walt Cutler, who had worked on Uncle Sep's farm for several years, sat on the machine to keep it operating, while the driver rode the lead horse of the rear team. It seems that Cutler had been seen running away from a moonshine still which had been wrecked by some deputy sheriffs known in the county as Jackleg officers. The binder was operating in the field where my dwelling house now stands; we boys were shocking wheat when we heard several shots from the vicinity of the machine. We looked in that direction and saw the black man running downhill toward Three Mile Creek with two white men after him firing revolvers every few steps. He was not hit and went directly through the creek and into the woods on the Doe Hill side, leaving his pursuers well behind. After stopping his team, the driver, Aith Taylor, sat there on his horse watching the racing men, muttering to himself, "Ah, that's bad business. Bad business." It was near noon, so we unhitched and went in for lunch. The deputies came up and got a thorough tongue lashing from Taylor. He said, "You deputies have little to do, layin' around in the woods and jumping a man that's tryin' to do an honest day's work. You come around here pointin' your little old rusty guns at me again and I'll take them away from you and stick them up your ———." They made some weak answer and sneaked away without their intended prisoner. Not long afterward one of these men was convicted and sent to prison for participating in lynching a feeble-minded white man who had been associating with one of the few black families in Avery County.

An hour later a neighbor woman came to the house and told Mother that Walt Cutler had come out of the woods at their home about noon. She had given him something to eat and agreed to come up to our house and bring him the pistol he had left hanging in the harness room at the barn that morning before he started to work in the field. She did not want to be seen carrying the gun, so they decided that I should be the one to take it to him. They hung the gun belt around my shoulder under my jacket. I was too short to carry it around my waist without having it reach the ground. I went marching down the road beside the neighbor lady as proud as could be and handed the gun over to the big black man. His eyes lit up with thanks as he buckled it on and went on his way, saying, "I ain't throwed no lead yet, but I will if I have to."



Country Schools and Pastimes

Among the strongest of all influences on any child's early life are the schools he attends. Here in the Carolina mountains, schools were very meager during my childhood. Fortunately for our family, both Dad and Mother were what was considered "educated" in those days. Mother was born in the small Burke County town of Rutherford College, named for the tiny religiously-oriented college located there. When she was seventeen, Dad was a student there, and they met and married before either had earned a degree. However, college degrees were quite rare then. Dad had already completed enough work in the private and "subscription" schools of the day to have been a teacher when only seventeen. He had attended some of the "writing" schools in vogue then and developed a beautiful Spencerian penmanship, which none of his sons were able to equal. Fancy penmanship was considered highly important then, probably because there were no typewriters or duplicators, and all deeds, correspondence, and legal documents had to be done by hand.

The first school I attended was at the old Walnut Grove one-room schoolhouse about a mile up the valley, near where the Presbyterian church now stands. This was what was called a summer school, which lasted three or four weeks during the summer season. I was taught by a friendly, good-looking young lady from "down the country," who offered a prize of a little penknife to the first grader who could be first to learn to sing the alphabet to the tune of "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep." Songs were easy for me to memorize, so I proudly brought home the prize! But I still remember losing it through a hole in my pants pocket within a few days and crying because I couldn't find it.

As I remember, we had a three-month school at Walnut Grove the next year, taught by a young man named Steve Johnson. I remember

that he "boarded" with "Honey Waites" Wiseman and played the banjo. He was a handsome fellow, lots of fun, especially during recess on the playground. For some reason there was no school at Walnut Grove next year, and I attended Oak Hill, another one-room school over on Toe River. The teacher, a Miss Duncan, was not quite so friendly, and I soon got into trouble. The boys of that school got hold of some tobacco and proceeded to go out into the nearby thicket during recess to smoke. I actually did not care for it but took a few puffs to keep up with the crowd. Someone spied on us and told the teacher. She lined us all up when "books" time came and gave us a whipping with a hickory switch. As she did so she asked each of us to admit smoking. I was scared of the switch and tried to deny being guilty. Another boy told her I had, so she switched me anyhow. It hurt our pride more than our bottoms.

The following year we had school at Walnut Grove again with George Goodman as teacher. In wintertime this teacher spent a good deal of time chopping wood for the old cast iron heater with his double-bitted axe. Goodman was a sort of walking encyclopedia and almanac. He could reel off history dates and statistics by the hour, giving no significance or reason for the dates, just dates. But then, many old-time scholars were proud to know a bit of Latin, plus a lot of dates of battles and treaties and would spout them at any opportunity. He had married into the Wise family of huge rough men and girls, was henpecked by the girls and browbeaten by his in-laws. No wonder he sometimes came to school slightly under the influence of strong drink. For exercise and recreation during recess at school, instead of calisthenics, basketball, football, and track, we played fox and hounds, "town ball," tug of war, and a game we called "base." We also played marbles.

I have no idea where the game "town ball" got its name. It was played with any kind of ball and bat, the ball usually homemade by winding yarn around a buckeye or marble and a bat whittled out of a short, thick board. At the beginning of the game two of the older boys would choose sides in this manner: one tossed the bat or stick through the air to the other who caught it somewhere near the bottom. Then they grasped it fist over fist until there was no room at the top. The one whose fist ended up on top got the privilege of choosing the first player. Then they alternately chose one after another until all the players were on one side or the other. Each captain designated a pitcher and catcher. Everyone took a turn at bat and ran the bases as they do in baseball, but a player was called "out" when the ball was fielded and thrown across in front of him as he ran between bases; "crossing out" it was called.

In the game called base, after choosing up sides, the players took places on opposite sides of the field, using a log or tree, etc. as their base. It was a game of foot races where the object was to come as near as possible to the opponent's base, then outrun him back to your own base before he could catch and tag you. The player leaving the base last had "base" on the other. To leave your own base and run all the way around that of the opposing team without getting tagged was considered quite a feat and a slur on the other team. Those who got tagged were out and had to sit on the sidelines until there were no players left on one side or those left were afraid to leave their base. Then it started all over again. The game was crudely simple, but the dares and challenges, the individual races of the older players, and fist fights which often developed held everyone's continuous interest.

In the game of fox and hounds we sometimes ran so far into the nearby woods during the noon lunch hour that we did not hear the teacher ring the bell, showed up late for "books" and got punished for it.

As I mentioned earlier, schools were skimpy and rather uncertain here in the mountains until about 1916. Young ladies from down state would come up to the community, possibly with best intentions of becoming good teachers. But when they saw the bare, one-room buildings, as many as forty-five students, some of them as old as the teacher, it must have been disheartening. Some of the big, strapping boys towered over the little teacher and were not well behaved. I remember on one occasion a teacher undertook to whip one of the big boys. He simply caught her hand and held on until she gave up in tearful defeat. Shortly afterwards she packed her grip and left the community. Some were smart enough to get the big boys on their side and were able to handle the rest of the students with their help.

No doubt the problem of discipline was the chief reason my father, Edward Wiseman, was always in demand as a teacher. He stood six feet three, was rawboned, and weighed about 190 pounds. There is no record of any school bully standing up to him. He let it be known the first day of school that he was in charge and anyone who remained in school would obey the rules. A gang of rowdies at Plumtree School had driven off the last teacher and partially wrecked the building and equipment, when the local school committee chairman came and persuaded Dad to come and take over. He walked up Clear Creek and across Little Buck Hill, stopping to select and cut a half dozen hickory and shawnee haw switches about six feet in length on the way. When he stalked in the front door and down the aisle, a sudden quiet fell over the school. He set the switches up in a corner of the room, turned around and proceeded to teach without any more trouble. It is said he had a way of gauging how much learning a big dumb boy could take in

a classroom; at that point he was sent outside to grub a stump, pile rocks, chop wood, or set out a tree while he got his big feet back on the ground and was willing to sit at his school desk for more lessons.

He taught his first school in an old log schoolhouse which stood beside the dirt road in front of the present Pine Grove Church. This old building was already gone when I first attended the church, but a number of people remembered going to school there and Dad's teaching experiences when he was seventeen. He was not a church member, but always insisted on having a sort of chapel service just after the noon hour every day. At this time he called the attendance role and had a few students recite a Bible verse or what he called a "memory gem"—a proverb such as those from *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Then he usually asked the students to sing a "patriotic" song or an old hymn. He could lead the singing himself, but liked for someone else to do so. On one occasion at Pine Grove, the big girls organized the students to remain silent and let him sing himself. He did so, but next day instead of singing at chapel time the entire student body was lined up against the wall and given a whipping, girls, boys and all.

I was not a student of my father until I advanced to the sixth grade. By that time, school consolidation was taking place in our county. The old Walnut Grove School, the Brushy Creek School, and the Oak Hill School were consolidated to become the Mullein Hill School in a new four-room building which stood beside Mullein Hill Road a short distance from our home. Just enough land had been cleared for the new building, leaving dense woods all around it. Dad, as principal with three assistant teachers, proceeded to make use of the muscle power of the students to clear up more land, set out ornamental shrubbery, and sow grass on the grounds. There was very little room for games at recess until some of this area had been cleared. He provided crosscut saws, axes, and other tools, always setting a strong example of using them first himself. Besides the work we did at recess time, any misdemeanor of a boy in class or on the grounds meant he got a penalty of grubbing a stump or felling a tree. Sometimes even this was not enough. I remember there were two boys he had stopped fighting two or three times in a week. Glancing out a window one day he saw them going at it again. He leapt out the window, caught them both by the scruff of the neck and bumped their two heads together. They ended up on the ground rubbing their heads and lost interest in fighting.

It is a wonder that some of the parents did not come in on him for punishing their offspring in this fashion, but I heard of only one instance when one threatened to do so. While teaching at Walnut Grove, he gave Sadie Aldridge, who later married Jesse Wiseman, a whipping for some kind of disobedience. Her mother, Belle Aldridge, sent word she was coming down to the schoolhouse to give him a cussing for

beating her daughter. He is reported to have said, "Go tell Belle I'm running this school, and if she comes down here, I'll give her a worse whipping than I gave Sadie." The irate mother never showed up to make good on her threat.

Years later, after I had come back to live in Three Mile Valley, many of his former students made a point of telling me they realized as they grew older that "Mr. Ed" was just what the schools needed in those days. Looking back on it, they apparently decided that any punishment he gave was deserved. "He never hit me a lick amiss," they often say. Personally, I would rather not have had my father as teacher. I knew I had to be extra careful not to break any rules because he would have bent over backwards to prove he was not showing any partiality to members of his own family.

With Dad as principal the school became a sort of community center for a time. Organized athletics were a long way in the future, but singing schools, box suppers, ice cream socials, etc. were still in style. Such simple events were subjects of conversation for weeks and drew large crowds because there was little other entertainment in the days before radio, television and movies. Few people owned cars in which to go out of the valley for amusement. Teachers used such events to raise money for school supplies and improvements. A few cents for each person who attended helped build a fund to keep up repairs and buy the meager classroom supplies. A teacher had to serve as janitor along with what help he or she could get from the older students.

Pie suppers and box suppers were great fun in those days. Every girl of "courting" age was expected to bring a box lunch or bake a pie to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. If it was a box supper, the lunch was usually put into a box about the size of a shoe box, which had been decorated with fancy colored paper and bright ribbons. If a pie was to be auctioned, the girl usually brought it in a dainty homemade basket which she had fashioned from cardboard with a handle covered with flowers and gay ribbon. Dressed in her best "Sunday-go-to meetin' " she brought it to the large table near the front of the auditorium and was given a number by which her boy friend could identify her offering. When it was time for the selling to start, the auctioneer would hold up the pie or box, give the identifying number and the bidding would begin.

One of the best auctioneers around at that time was Bill Buchanan, a timber buyer for a lumber company. He would get up and tell what they were raising money for, hold up the first pie, make a few remarks about the lovely girl who brought it, how good it smelled, how lucky the young man who got to help eat it would be, and the bidding would begin. Sometimes there were a few tipplers in the back who tried to be funny or bid off a pie and run away before paying, but the auctioneer

usually knew how to handle them. Sam Gardner from Elk Park nearly always was on hand with just enough giggle water under his belt to be happy and generous. Almost every time the auctioneer held up a pie and asked for bids, he would yell, "Thirty cents." After a few times this became funny, but it served to put everyone in a good mood. Bill Buchanan would say, "Sam, if you don't get rid of that old rusty thirty cents and start bidding at least fifty, I'm gonna tell Maggie Graybeal to hit you in the face with her pie when you sit down to eat with her."

The more the fellow was willing to bid for a girl's pie or box lunch, the more he proved how much he liked her. Sometimes the young bucks would try their best to outdo each other and bid a pretty girl's pie up to as much as thirty dollars, a lot of money in those days.

Along with the pie supper, they often had a prettiest girl and ugliest man contest. Anyone could put up a dollar to enter a candidate, then tickets were sold at ten cents each until winners were determined by the one for whom most tickets were bought. Quite often the auctioneer was declared the ugliest man. He loved it of course.

Following this they usually had a cake walk. They would set a good-looking cake on display and sell tickets to enter the walk. You bought a ticket for you and your girl and got in line around the edge of the room. When the music started, you started "walking." Nobody knew just where the finish line was—a mark on the floor—placed there by the judges. The couple who was on or nearest the mark when the music stopped won the cake.

Singing schools were held at Mullein Hill usually once a year. There were traveling teachers who went from community to community offering to hold singing school at any church or settlement where the school committee or church people would provide the building and room and meals for the teacher. A small cash fee was paid by anyone who wanted to enroll for a daily class over a two-week period. They taught music by the old shape note method. This was the method widely used in rural churches all over the South and still prevalent at such gatherings as "Singin' on the Mountain" at Grandfather Mountain here in Avery County. I attended some of these schools where the teacher wrote "buckwheat" notes on the blackboard, used a tuning fork to get the pitch and taught old-fashioned fundamentalist religious songs. Very few of the teachers had musical instruments to use in teaching. I remember that a Mr. Fonze Buchanan once brought a small reed organ, which he played by pumping the bellows with his feet. Next time he came a year later there was no organ. The story went around that he came home one day and found his teen-age niece playing "Sugar Babe" on it. He considered playing such a worldly song on his beloved organ an outrage and never again used it for religious music.

Some of the old-time mountain choirs were quite good musically in spite of their antiquated methods. They sang on pitch and could sight read the shaped notes from all the old hymn books. One night after supper I went to Mullein Hill schoolhouse to listen to the choir practice when I was still too small to join in the singing. I sat alone at a back desk and began to feel quite drowsy as I listened to the sweet singing up front. Pretty soon my head drooped down on the desk in front of me. Next thing I knew I woke in a pitch black empty room all alone. The front door was locked outside. I had to feel my way to a window, raise it, and crawl out. It had been raining and was terribly dark and scary outside. After bumping into a few trees, I found the dirt road, waded through a mudhole or two and got home, shaken but glad to see the little light Mother kept in the window.

Life on a mountain farm in those days called for so much work by every member of the family, including small boys, that we did not have much time for play. Still we somehow managed to get in a good deal of fishing, hunting or trapping, and swimming. There was a swimming hole in the meadow below our house where we all learned to paddle about at an early age. Mother always wanted us to wait until the water warmed up enough so that we would not get chilled and catch cold, but when the first warm days of summer came, we could hardly wait to get to the swimming hole. Our favorite time was just after lunch while Dad was resting. He was an early riser, up every morning at five o'clock doing chores, but at midday he usually turned a ladder-back chair down on the porch, placed a sheep-skin rug against it for a headrest and took a nap. We boys would swallow our lunch hurriedly and head for the creek, hoping Dad would sleep an hour, which he did unless there was hay on the ground and it looked like rain that day. Always barefoot by that time of year, we began undressing as we raced through the meadow and were ready to leave our pants behind a willow bush and leap into the water in a twinkling. No bathing suits for us! No need for such, because no girls were ever allowed to come near our swimming hole. Nothing ever felt so good to our sweaty young bodies as that cool clear unpolluted mountain creek water. Too soon Dad would wake up and yell for us to go back to the field to work. Many of the neighborhood kids came to swim at our swimming hole. This made it all the more fun when we had company. The mother of one family was an old-fashioned lady who believed that swimming was bad for anybody and caused "rheumatiz." She came one day while we were in the water, yanked her three boys out and gave them a whipping. After that we felt sorry for them because they had to sit on the bank while we gamboled and romped in the water. They grew to manhood without ever learning to swim. This must have been a blow to their pride and a psychological handicap all through life.

During late summer we looked eagerly forward to the time when chesnuts and chinquapins would be ripe. The American chesnut, to my mind one of the noblest of trees, is no more. European blight, a fungus disease, killed them all during the late twenties. Until then there were great groves of these trees all over our southern mountains. Some of them were giants of the forest, as much as five feet thick and seventy-five or eighty feet tall. In autumn the ground under them would actually be covered with nuts and burrs. They were delicious eating—much tastier than the Chinese varieties street vendors sold. We youngsters loved to go chesnut hunting. Courting couples made this an excuse to go walking in the woods. We boys usually kept our pockets full and went around chewing on them all day long. We had cute little games we played involving swapping handfuls of them. In one called “Jack-in-the-bush” the player held a number of nuts in his closed hand and said, “Jack-in-the-bush.” The other player said, “Cut him down.” The first answered, “How many licks?” If the other guessed the number of nuts in the hand, he won them for himself. Another guessing game was called “Hull Gull.” The first player held some nuts in his fist and said, “Hull gull.” The second player said, “Hand full.” The first player asked, “How many?” If the other player guessed correctly he got the nuts. If not, he had to give the first player the correct number of nuts.

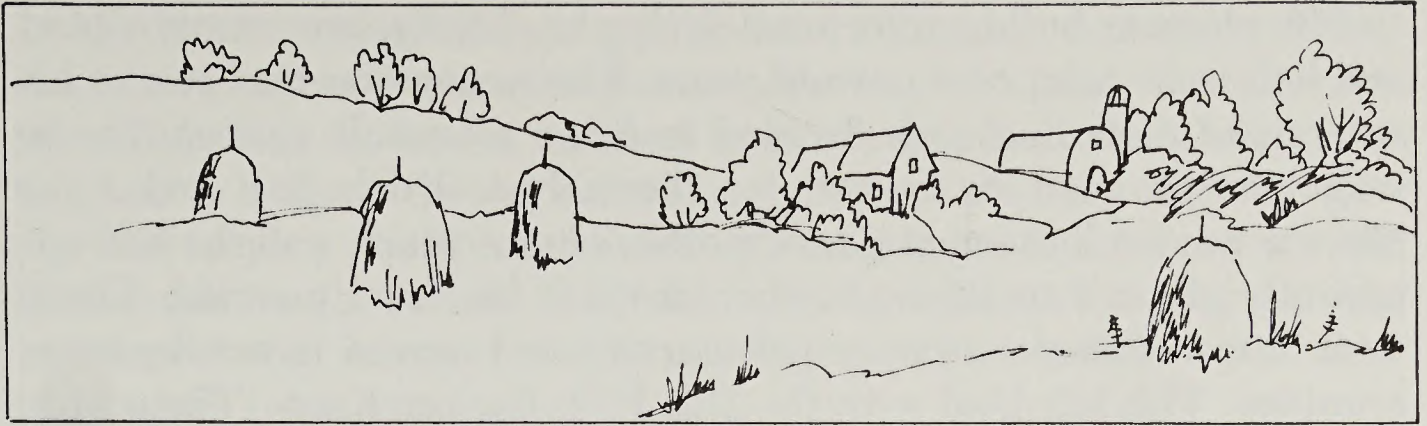
Hogs, squirrels, bears, deer, and other animals ate chesnuts and grew fat in late fall every year. Many mountain people turned their pigs loose in the woods to fatten on “mast,” i.e., acorns and chesnuts. It was cheaper than feeding corn, and the meat of a pig fattened on nuts had a fine flavor. With so many hogs roaming the woods and mixing with those of neighboring farmers, it was necessary for each to have an identifying mark. Dad’s mark was “swallow fork in the left ear.” I remember that he caught each animal when it was small and cut his mark in its ear. This soon healed but was there for identification purposes ever after. Some of these hogs almost reverted to a wild state from staying out in the woods a long time. Usually they could be tolled home by taking a basket of corn about the time of the first wintry spell and dropping a few grains for them to eat here and there as they followed along. If this did not succeed, we sometimes built a pen of rails with a sliding door of boards and arranged a trap baited with corn. At other times it was necessary to use dogs to catch the hogs. There was a special breed of cur dog for this purpose which could chase a hog, catch him by the hind leg and hold him until a man could come with ropes and tie him.

Chesnut trees were fine for other purposes also. Many of the huge trunks were perfectly straight and free of knots for as much as thirty feet from the ground. They split easily, and almost all fences in this

area were made from chesnut rails. These did not rot for many years. Even now, forty years or more since the last chesnut tree died, there are rails around about. Wealthy folks pay a fancy price to get them for a rustic type fence at their homes or vacation lodges. They are willing to pay a premium for old split rails which have come from dismantling a fence found still standing after many years. The old rails have developed a certain color and patina, making them more desirable. Mountain men who make their living gathering and selling woods products and doing odd jobs are still scouring the wooded areas for chesnut poles which remain standing and logs still sound enough to be split into rails. Sometimes a huge log will lie on the ground for years. The core of it will have decayed, but the outside shell is still good enough to use.

Before the chesnut blight struck them, the huge straight-grained logs made fine lumber, although it was so plentiful most of the people did not consider it as valuable as other hardwoods. It had to be free of all knots, worm holes or other defects to bring a decent price in those days. When the trees were no longer plentiful, wormy chesnut lumber and paneling suddenly became stylish, especially for dens and recreation rooms. Soon the price was as much as twenty times what it was earlier, and it is not now available at any price except in rare instances where some can be found and salvaged from an old building such as a mountain cabin or barn.

Another product of the chesnut tree found to be useful here in the Carolina mountains was its bark. While the sap was high in summer months, they were easily skinned with an axe and spud. This was a metal bar about three feet in length, with a flattened end to slip under the bark and pry it loose from the log. Rings were chopped around the trunk as wide apart as the bark was to be cut. Then the bark was peeled off and stacked in ricks, one layer on top of another. This caused it to flatten into sheets as it dried. The sheets, as much as an inch thick, made fine weatherboarding for the exterior of buildings. It had a rough rustic appearance, needed no painting, and withstood wind and weather for twenty years.



The Wiseman Homeplace and Farming

Referring again to the house I and all my brothers and sisters were born in, we do not have any clear record of who built it and occupied it when it was new. Aunt Zona Hughes told someone that Granddad James Gaither (Gusher) and Grandmother Elmira (Pyatte) Wiseman had been living there before my dad and mother were married. But apparently they had moved to her ancestral home, the Pyatte farm on Toe River, before any of my brothers and sisters were born and Dad and Mother had moved into the old house.

While it was an unusual house in many ways, Mother was never completely satisfied to live there. Because the lumber had been sawn by hand with an old-fashioned up-and-down saw, it was not very straight. There were no drying kilns to season it, so it was used after being air-cured for a short time. For this reason the house was never air tight by any means, but was quite drafty in winter. I remember that we wore long wool underwear all through the cold months and slept in it. Some of the rooms were papered with store-bought paper, but the kitchen and the back bedroom where we boys all slept was papered with newspaper. Every year or two they would add a new layer, hung with paste made of flour and water. I remember lying in bed after I was old enough to do so and reading things like advertisements for Reo, Essex, and Graham cars on the walls. Some of the floor boards were uneven. They were probably of pine, and the soft part had worn down from many years of walking, leaving the hard knotty parts still as high as ever. When the wind blew hard on a cold winter night, the old house had a habit of creaking and groaning as though it could barely stand up. We youngsters sleeping in the back room could imagine all kinds of frightening things around the house during the night before we went to sleep. Mother did not like the noises either, but Dad always seemed to snore happily through everything. However, I believe he was laying aside some money, a bit at a time, to build a new home on a nearby hill.

His plans to build, unfortunately for his family, were interrupted and had to be postponed several years. The reason was that two of his sisters and their husbands decided to bring a lawsuit against him to take part of what he owned for themselves. Uncle Sep and Aunt Mayme were still living at Grandmother's home place, and she had apparently given it to them. Neither of them had ever married. There were three other sisters who had married and moved to nearby communities. This left Dad with the Doe Hill, Gusher Knob, Three Mile property; Sep and Mayme with the Pyatte place; and the others out in the cold. Dad had deeds to his part, given to him by his father, but the girls and their husbands thought they could take it on a technicality. They hired lawyers who dug into some old rumors and came up with the claim that Dad was born too soon after Gusher's marriage and should be dispossessed on grounds of probable illegitimacy.

Having tried always to be a big brother to the girls and not approving completely of the husbands they had selected, this move raised his anger to the point where he was determined to hold onto the property. He said his father believed in the old English law of primogeniture, stating that the first-born son shall inherit all his father's estate. He went to Morganton and Marion and made arrangements with attorneys Mull and Pless, who were considered the best in the area to defend him. The suit dragged on for about three years, taking all Dad's savings and some borrowed money, but he won the case. Such things as law suits and ill feelings among the relatives or neighbors were hard for Mother to bear. She was so easy-going, soft-spoken and generous by nature that it made her terribly sad when people started quarreling and fighting for any reason.

Looking back on it, I believe both Dad and Mother were generous to a fault. In those days there was some peddler coming around and selling something every little while. Sometimes it was a poor old Jewish fellow who came walking up the dirt road with a pack on his back. Mother always asked them to come in, gave them a drink of water, and bought something, even if it was only a darning egg or thread and needles. "I felt sorry for the poor man, walking all that way in the hot sun with pack on his back," she would say. It is remarkable how people in the mountains trusted strangers back then. Time after time I have seen my folks take in travelers they had never seen before, give them food, a place to sleep and hardly ever accept or expect anything in return. So far as I know no one ever gave them any trouble or cause to regret their hospitality. But we must remember that in those days there were very few places where paid lodgings were available, transportation by foot or horseback was slow, and it would have been unkind to turn away anyone who was a long way from home with night coming on.

We children were always glad to have company, especially if they stayed overnight. We loved to listen to the big folks talk. The taller the tales they told, the better we liked them. People had plenty of time to talk and to listen in the days of oil lamps. About the only other thing to do was to play the hand-cranked phonograph or plunk on an old homemade banjo. I doubt if I would ever have learned to play a string instrument well enough to make a living at it if we hadn't had all that time while I was growing up.

With all the cattle, sheep, and horses we had on the farm there was need for lots of hay to be harvested and stored for winter feeding. Haymaking during the early part of the century, like most farm work, was largely done by hand. True, we had a horse-drawn mowing machine with a four- or five-foot sickle. We also had a dump rake, something we rarely see these days. It would gather hay in windrows many times faster than a man could do it with a pitchfork, but was nothing like the tractor-operated side-delivery models of later vintage. I sat up on the iron seat and operated the dump rake about as soon as I could drive a team of horses. You had to be careful to kick the dump treadle with your foot and let go at once or it would continue to dump until it kicked the seat off the rake.

After the hay was in windrows, it was shocked by hand with pitchforks in piles about as big as two men could carry on a set of haypoles. These were made of carefully selected, straight saplings about four inches in diameter. They were peeled and scraped to remove all knots and splinters, sharpened on the ends and seasoned to make them light and springy. Sometimes, if the ground were uneven, they were hard to shove under the shocks. But once you succeeded, one man or boy walked between the poles in front, the other behind the shock, and carried it to the stack. This was hard work, but the job that required the most brawn was pitching the hay around the stack pole, which had been stuck into the ground in the center of a foundation of rails to keep ground moisture from rotting the hay. The higher the stack, the more muscle it took to fork the hay up to the man or boy who stayed on top to tramp it in place. The stack had to be shaped just right, with no benches to catch rain water, and it had to have a gently-rounded top.

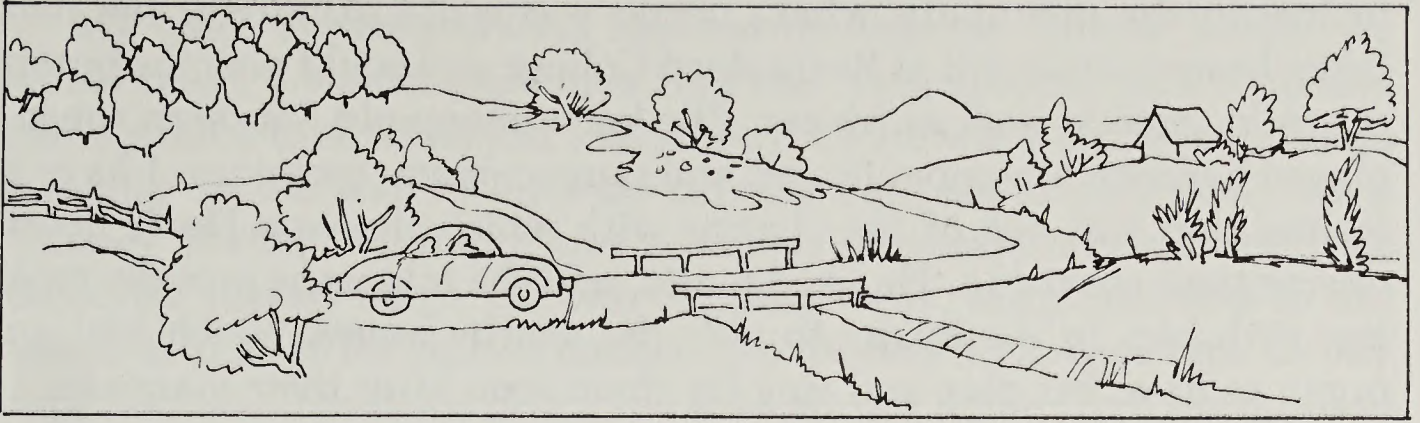
Folks say Dad always managed to get his hay stacked in better shape than anyone around in the valley. No doubt this was because he watched the weather carefully, started mowing his grass early, and stayed on the job every waking hour. I remember he would be out trimming with a scythe where the machine could not mow around the edge of fields soon in the morning. Then he would stir, te[n]d, and turn heavy bunches or shaded spots with his pitchfork before we brought the rake into the field. By the time it was dry enough to rake, he had stackpoles standing and foundations ready. When the hay was in shocks, while

the big boys carried it on poles, he put a small boy on the stack and started pitching it around the pole. It kept us hustling to bring it in, because it seemed he could pitch a big shock up on the shock with two forkfuls.

These stacks stood in the meadows until winter, to be hauled to the barn as needed; sometimes they were fed out there in the field. I can remember when every meadow from one end of the valley to the other was dotted with these many old-fashioned haystacks. This was mighty pretty scene, specially in autumn when woods on the mountainsides were brilliant with fall leaf color and here and there a field of wigwam-type corn shocks with yellow pumpkins round about on the ground.

In order to keep his teaching certificate up to requirements Dad sometimes had to go away to teachers' institutes and summer school before the hay was all stacked. We youngsters were left with Mother to carry on with the farm. She ran the house, but we boys had the jobs of looking after stock, stacking the balance of the hay, and hiving bees if they swarmed.

Of all the the jobs we did, I liked bee-hiving least. We had some twenty or more hives, which provided us with plenty of fine honey for the table and some to sell. But the young queen would always decide to take her brood, leave the hive, and settle on a limb high in a tree when we had other things that needed doing. Dad had sent off and ordered the finest bees he could find and never wanted to lose a swarm. So I would get a ladder, put on gloves and veil, and proceed to climb the tree with a smoke rag. The smoke from the rag was supposed to calm the bees so that I could rake them into a basket, let them down with a rope and carry them to the new hive where they would set up housekeeping and start making honey. But somehow they seemed to know I was not the beekeeper they knew and would not cooperate. It is said that if you are scared, they can smell it. They usually managed to crawl up a sleeve and give me a few stings no matter how well I had covered up. Sometimes I lost sight of their beloved queen, and they promptly left the new hive to find her and wad up around her again in the tree. Then I had to start all over. Sometimes, though, I was successful enough to have a flourishing new hive of working bees to show Dad when he came home.



Radio, Music, High School, and Automobiles

Along about the time I finished grade school at Mullein Hill, the first radio set was brought into the community. Our family did not own one until sometime later, and the one Robert and Lottie Wiseman brought attracted plenty of attention. If there was an important event such as a presidential election or world champion prize fight, neighbors gathered in from miles around to enjoy listening. The idea of actually hearing a political speech broadcast from Pittsburgh or a prize fight from Chicago was almost unbelievable. Most news in the past was several days old, delivered in the newspaper carried by the R.F.D. mailman.

During the week before a Jack Dempsey title fight, my two younger brothers, Howard, Glenn, and a neighbor named Buck had been helping me finish haymaking. Dad was away at summer school in Boone, and I had promised the boys that if they worked hard and helped get the hay up, we would go to "Uncle Robert's" and listen to the fight on the night it was scheduled. I kept telling them stories about the great Jack Dempsey every day. Some were true and some I made up just to whet their interest. They worked like the dickens all week. After supper we saddled up two horses to go hear the fight. One boy rode behind my saddle and one behind the biggest other boy down the old dirt road. Fortunately, reception on the battery-powered radio was good enough that we could hear even though the house was full of people and we sat on the porch with our feet dangling over the edge. When the announcer came on, scarcely anyone spoke a word or changed position until it was over and the great Dempsey vanquished another challenger as we all expected him to do.

Music has been an important part of my life from early childhood. As I wrote earlier, Mother sang often at our home and encouraged us youngsters to sing or learn to play a musical instrument of some kind when we were just toddlers. Although she had married early and come

to live in the mountains where music was quite primitive, she had taken lessons while still at Rutherford College and could play the pump organ by note as well as by ear. She knew many old Southern songs, played her own accompaniment, and sang on many occasions. I have a feeling that was one of the charms with which she won Dad's heart during their courtship. He liked music, and she told us he proudly took her with him in the buggy to visit the nearby homes which had an organ to have her play and sing for them soon after their marriage.

Almost every summer, Mother's sister, Aunt Sally McCall, and her attorney husband would come up from Charlotte with their family and stay two or three weeks to get away from the city heat and relax on our mountain farm. Her husband was a big man with a tummy, a fine sense of humor, and a love of music and good food. He always brought Mother candy—those fancy old-fashioned boxes of "Whitman's Samplers"—about the best available in those days. After supper, during the long summer twilight, he would tease and coax Mother to sit down at the organ to play and sing such songs as "Yellow Rose of Texas," "Camptown Races," "Betsy Brown," or as an instrumental, "Black Hawk Waltz."

In one of the small houses on our farm there lived a musical couple named Will and Beuna Hullander. Will played the fiddle, and Beuna played the banjo. They were always invited to the house to "make music" at least once while the McCalls were visiting. When it came to backwoods mountain music they really had it. They would sit on low ladder-back chairs facing each other, their knees almost touching, tune up, rear back and let it fly, singing at the tops of their voices, sawing away on the fiddle, plunking on the banjo, and stomping the floor with both feet. J.D. McCall would roar with delight and keep asking for more. Will and Beuna enjoyed it too. They knew lawyer McCall would see that they had some "foldin' " money in their pockets when they were through.

There were square dances, "frolics" as they were called, at certain homes on Buck Hill, in Plumtree, Linville Falls and elsewhere in the area from time to time. Preachers took a dim view of dancing in any form and spent much time talking against it. No doubt this was because there was sometimes drinking, fighting, and carousing at dances. In spite of all the preaching, the young folks kept on dancing, having their fling, and doing their thing, as no doubt they always will. Our Dad and Mother did not participate in this, but they did not condemn it either. Being a teacher, he had to think of his reputation. The older boys had his consent to go whenever they wished. They rode his saddle horses and were often out till almost daybreak, especially on Saturday nights.

My older brothers always had harmonicas, or "french harps" we called them. I would sometimes find one lying around, pick it up and fumble out a tune when just a small boy. There was a homemade banjo hanging on the wall, which my brother Paul could play fairly well. "Honey Waites" Wiseman was a famous mountain musician in those days. He played banjo the old "rapping" way, sang, and was in demand as fiddler for square dances. On his way to Spruce Pine to buy supplies, he often came down the road by our house from his farm on Buck Hill in his wagon. He would usually stop at our gate, tie up his team, come prancing into the house, kiss all the girls, grab the banjo, play and sing a song, then say, "God, honey (his favorite expression), I've got to go now, but I'll stop on my way back home and bring you some candy." As small children we could hardly wait, and he always came back with a little paper sack of chocolate drops or "coconut bonbons."

When Honey Waites played the banjo, I watched and tried to imitate him after he left the house. The big trouble was that he played left-handed, noting the instrument with his right hand and strumming with his left. Being right-handed, I had to do the opposite but learned to play a few tunes fairly well. One Sunday my idol stopped at our house on the way home from a Saturday night dance and brought along his fiddle. Mother told him I could pick a few tunes on the banjo, and he let me play along while he played fiddle. I was shy and shaky, but he was delighted to find I could play and complimented me so much that I tried all the more after he left to make it sound just right.

The guitar was not well known in the mountains at that time. The popular instruments were the banjo and fiddle. These and the french harp were all they played for dances. One day at a gathering held at the local school, a young man stood outside the building with his foot on a stump, playing guitar and singing. He "chorded" on his guitar and sang a dozen or more old-time songs, holding the rapt attention of a crowd of kids and grownups for almost an hour. I had never heard anything so appealing. One song he did was a sentimental old ballad called "Fond Affection." He was asked by bystanders to repeat this number two or three times. After I got home that evening, I had memorized all the verses without trying, I was so impressed.

I told Mother I just *had* to find some way to get hold of a guitar. She was sympathetic, having heard as a young girl, these instruments played by "serenaders" beneath the windows of young ladies by adoring swains in Rutherford College. No doubt she talked it over with Dad, for a few days later, she had a suggestion. There was a pig in a litter on the place which was too small and weak to get its part of its mother's milk and was not doing well. She told me Dad said I could have it to raise if I would make a pen for it, feed it regularly, and care for it until it got big enough to sell. A pig of my own which I could sell

to buy a guitar! I was delighted, and the pig thrived in its little pen. No wonder! I fed it all the grain it would eat and gave it plenty of fresh whole warm milk right out of the cows we milked each night and morning.

All the time the pig was growing I kept looking at mail order catalogs, studying the guitars they offered, and waiting for the day I could send off an order for one. Then one day a man came looking for pigs he could buy. By that time mine was the best-looking one on the place. Mother helped me make a deal which let me order a \$10 Sears Roebuck guitar, complete with case and lessons, with a few dollars left over. We knew it would take about a week for it to come in the mail, but I started running to the post office every day three days after we sent off the order. When it finally came, I was no doubt the happiest kid in the valley.

Mother looked it over and saw that the instruction book was intended to teach me how to play by note. She encouraged me to follow the instructions and not start chording and singing right away. How wise she was I had no idea at the time! There were scales, staffs, key signatures and exercises I thought I would never be able to learn. But with her encouragement I made at least a beginning in learning to read music. I sat alone for hours with my guitar and instruction book, but would fake out occasionally and go where I could find someone who could teach me how to play simple chords and sing like the young man I had heard at the schoolhouse the year before.

Honey Waites frequently had dances at his house and invited me to come spend the night and play along with the other older musicians. I usually played banjo, but occasionally they would let me play the guitar and sing a song during intermission.

Along about the time of World War I, Mother ordered a Silvertone phonograph from Sears, a console model with disc records and wind-up crank. There were no country songs available on records at the time. We had war songs such as "Keep the Home Fires Burning," "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," and "My Sweetheart Is Somewhere in France." There were a few Negro spirituals and the popular tin pan alley songs of the day such as "Peggy O'Neal" and "My Little Girl." Then, in the early twenties, Vernon Dalhart's recording of "Prisoner's Song" made such a hit that all the record companies started turning out country records by the thousands. "The Wreck of Old Ninety-Seven" by Henry Whittier and some of Fiddlin' John Carson's records were tremendous sellers. I spent every penny I could get buying these records and soon learned to play and sing them all. Henry Whittier played harmonica and guitar at the same time, with a rack holding the harmonica. I ordered a harmonica holder and was soon doing the same thing. Instrumental introductions and interludes with my songs made them interesting, folks told me.

After finishing grammar school at Mullein Hill, I wanted to go to high school but was so timid and bashful that I was afraid to start. The thought of going to a new school where there were so many students I had never met, new teachers, and such dreaded subjects as Latin and geometry to learn had me quaking. The nearest high school was Riverside at Plumtree, about six miles from home. There, grades eight and nine were taught. With Mother's urging I screwed up my courage, saddled a horse, and rode up to Riverside the day after fall term began. Instead of going inside, I sat on my horse and told a boy I saw to tell the principal I wanted to see him. Mr. Rush Stroup was principal, and a more kind and good-natured man I have never known. When he came out, I told him I had finished seventh grade and would like to come to his school. He ignored my presumptuousness in making him come out, told me in his quiet way that they would be glad to have me, and gave me a list of books I would need.

The road from Plumtree was paved down as far as the old Bill Buchanan place, about three miles. A bus ran only as far as the road was paved. Many of the kids from Ingalls vicinity near my home were walking almost three miles and riding the bus the rest of the way to school. Dad's sister, Aunt Mayme, lived near the end of the bus line. It was arranged that I would ride a horse across Gusher Knob, ford the river at Ingram Ford, leave the horse in Aunt Mayme's barn, and ride the bus on to school. This worked pretty well except when heavy rains flooded the river. On some occasions I was unable to get the horse to take me across the flooded stream. He would start to see logs and trees floating down on the red, muddy torrent and back out. This caused me to miss several days of school that year. At any rate, I soon made friends at school and got over my timidity.

It was during my first year of high school at Riverside that I got a chance to learn to drive a car. During the time I was in grade school, automobiles made their first appearance in the mountains. Their late arrival in the area came about because of the condition of the roads, which were mostly eight foot-wide cartways, their only maintenance by having each able-bodied citizen put in a few days' work on them each year. They usually followed rivers or creeks, crossing and re-crossing them time and again by means of fords. There were scarcely any bridges except pedestrian "swinging bridges," which hung on cables high above the streams. Horses pulling wagons, buggies, etc. could slog through the fords without any trouble, but when cars tried it, water soon drowned out their motors. Grades over hills were too steep for the low-powered vehicles of the day to navigate. There were always mudholes and swampy spots where they sank in to the axles and had to be pulled out with a team of horses. I frequently left the field with our team and went to help some strange-looking tourist on his way, when I was still a boy on the farm.

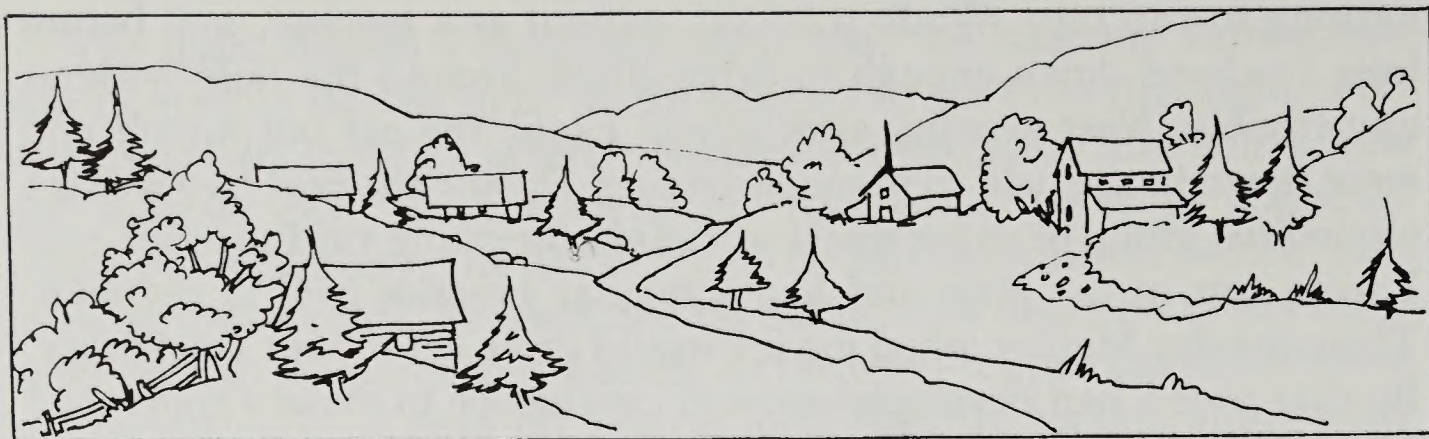
The more remote a mountain farm was, the later the automobile was in making its way in to where folks could get their first sight of it. A story is told about an elderly mountaineer sitting on his cabin porch one summer day, when from up the road came a strange popping, roaring and clanging, the like of which he had never heard before. Just to be on the safe side, he went into the cabin, took down his trusty rifle, went back to the porch and waited. As the open-topped car came down the rutted road, it gave off several loud backfire reports along with puffs of black smoke. The mountaineer raised his gun, took a couple of shots at the strange monster; the driver jumped out and ran into the woods, and the car continued on down the ruts in the road. When the mountaineer went inside to put up his gun, his wife asked, "Did you kill it, Paw?" He answered, "No I didn't, Maw. But I made it turn that man loose." Such tall tales are, of course, fictitious but serve to illustrate conditions that prevailed in the southern mountains at the turn of the century.

Some years later my father decided he would try raising a team of mules to use on the farm. We had a good team of percheron mares. Bred to a "Jack" or male donkey, they gave birth to two male mules. Dad had always kept horses and never liked mules, but Mother often talked about how much tougher workers and less finicky eaters they were than horses. The experiment was doomed to failure from the start. Those young mules were big and strong when they grew up, but mean, roguish fence-jumpers who would kick your hat off if they caught you unawares. Dad said he just couldn't trust them at all and would sell them the first chance he got. A man named Hobart Burleson from Minneapolis, N.C., heard about the mules and offered to trade a 1918 Dodge touring car, complete with side curtains for them. Nobody in the family could drive a car, but Dad had them park it in the old buggy shed and take the mules.

A friend and classmate at Riverside, Wade Buchanan, had been driving a car for some time, having learned from his older brother, a teacher who owned one. I had spent the night with Wade at his father's home several times that fall and asked him to come down and return the visit at my home soon afterwards. When he saw the car we owned, he asked if it would run. I said, "I reckon so. Let's try it." It started without any trouble. We rode up and down the road, and he said, "Let's take it down into the flat bottom field and you try driving it." I will never forget how my heart pounded as I sat under the old wooden steering wheel for the first time or how awkward I was trying to work the clutch with my foot and feed gas and spark with my hands at the same time. When I let out the clutch, I fed too much gas so that the car lurched and slowed several times in succession before I got the hang of it. It is a good thing we were doing it in an open field where there was

nothing to run into. Wade was very patient as a teacher, and before long I calmed down enough to drive circles around the field without any trouble. Next evening after school I took the car out myself and went down in the field to practice driving. During the next two weeks I circled the group of straw stacks at the old threshing yard so much that I wore ruts in the grass and had a regular practice oval of my own. Then one day Mother asked me if I would drive her to visit a neighbor. By that time I had developed enough confidence to make a short road trip. A few times I even changed out of low gear into second and high on a straight, level stretch of road.

Mother had lady friends in several adjoining counties and loved to visit them. She carried on correspondence with them, swapped flowers, recipes, clothing patterns, and could sit for hours just exchanging news and gossip. She had no fear of my ability to drive the old Dodge or to fix anything that went wrong with it. In fact I knew precious little about car maintenance, and there was scarcely anybody in the community who did at the time. But the 1918 Dodge was a tough, simply-built vehicle, a great deal like a modern Jeep. There was little to go wrong if you kept them in oil, gas, and tires. It was tires that gave trouble to all car owners in those days, and ours was no exception. They were worn when we got the car to the point that I had to do a patching job on almost every trip. I ordered some second-hand "casings" and inner tubes from a mail order catalog, but they lasted only a few miles. One time I drove Mother to Ashe County to visit my older sister and had ten flat tires on the way home. She would sit patiently in the back seat while I jacked up the car, pried off the old clincher type tires, patched the tubes, and put "shoes" inside the casings. I was so disgusted by the time we got home that I announced I would not go on another trip until we got new tires. I put the old Dodge in the shed for the last time that day. It sat there for years until a man who owned a small sawmill bought it from Dad and used the engine to run his mill until it finally wore out several years later.



Boarding School at Crossnore

Near the end of the term at Riverside that year Mr. Stroup told us he would be going to Crossnore to become principal of that much larger school where grammar grades and four years of high school were combined. I liked Mr. Stroup and began to make plans to enter Crossnore the next year. Crossnore was about six miles from home. A bus ran to Altamont—about half way—but I would have had to walk three miles and meet it at seven-thirty each morning. In winter this was shortly after daybreak, and with snow on the road, it would have been a rough deal. There was a dormitory at Crossnore operated by Crossnore School, Incorporated, under the direction of Mrs. Mary Martin Sloop. She and her physician husband had come to the mountains a few years earlier to do missionary work among the poor, uneducated mountain people. She had many friends among wealthy Presbyterians down state, and had persuaded them to provide funds to build and maintain boarding facilities for mountain boys and girls who lived too far from school to stay at home, or had no family to support them. Again my shyness caused me to dread entering a strange school with new teachers and many more students than Riverside. Staying away from home in a dormitory with strange boys from other areas was a prospect that gave me many qualms.

I talked this over with another boy who had been a student at Mullein Hill School in the grades with me and was spending part time in the dormitory at Crossnore. He told me there was nothing to fear and went with me to talk with Mrs. Sloop. She was, I discovered, so easy to talk with, so understanding and sympathetic that I soon began to gain confidence about living in a dormitory. She knew my parents, and although we were not considered poor folks, agreed that I could live in the dormitory and work to pay board and room because no bus was then running close to our home. The Crossnore boarding school was a small edition of Berea, Kentucky school where many mountain

boys and girls, including four of my older brothers had gone, working their way while getting an education. We were told that the cost of our room and meals would be two dollars a week! We would work this out at ten cents an hour in the kitchen, garden, the carpentry shop, on ground maintenance, etc.

Our daily routine at Crossnore began when a bell rang at 6:15 each morning. We jumped out of bed (old army cots), dressed and washed our faces in fifteen minutes. A second bell rang at 6:30 for breakfast. Mrs. J.D. Lyons, "Granny" we called her, a retired teacher from Tennessee ran the dining room. If anyone showed up late for a meal, he usually had to go hungry unless there was a good excuse. Breakfast never varied. It consisted of oatmeal with whole milk, toast with white margarine, and apple sauce or jelly. After breakfast we worked one hour before going to school. I chose to do carpentry work because my friend, Lee Carpenter, was doing that. Mr. Milligan Wise was in charge of carpentry and proved to be a very patient, efficient teacher and supervisor. All tools were checked out to individual workers. We were responsible for taking care of them and seeing that they were turned in at the tool house after work. New buildings were constantly being added on the campus, and we worked on construction jobs with older men who were in charge. I enjoyed carpentry; it was more interesting than doing field work on the farm at home. Mr. Wise taught us how to sharpen and care for tools, was patient when we made mistakes, and I have found the manual skill I developed at Crossnore a valuable asset around the home ever since.

After one hour of work we turned in our tools, went to our rooms to wash and pick up books, and on to school. At noon our lunch was brought to us on the playground or in the gymnasium if weather was bad. It usually consisted of two sandwiches, one of peanut butter and one of thin, runny apple jelly. During morning and afternoon recess and after our noon lunch we were allowed to romp and play on the school grounds or in the gym. After school we checked out our tools and went back to the dining hall for supper. This was our best meal of the day. Not much variety, but usually there was some kind of meat or beans, plenty of bread and milk and some kind of cake, pie, or pudding. Granny Lyons kept a firm hand in the dining room, always asked the blessing, and tolerated no horseplay. For several days one week the margarine placed on little porcelain chips beside our plates each evening was so stale and strong that we could not eat it. One night we piled all the little chips up in the center of the table in a neat stack and put a notice on it saying, "Non bonum." Some of us were taking Latin and thought such a label a smart idea. Next night at supper our chips had no margarine but a slip referring us to a certain verse in the Bible. Someone looked it up and found it advised us to eat what we had and

be thankful. Granny came to the table and gave us a dressing down about “writing legends about the food”—a lesson we were not to forget.

Before leaving the table every night we had “worship.” Mrs. Lyons or a teacher, sometimes an older student, read from the Bible and had a prayer. Rip Ferrel, a rowdy-type older student had to submit to this, but he said he thought Granny’s prayers never rose higher than the housetop. A short recess was allowed after supper, then we went to study hall from eight to nine. Ten o’clock was bedtime, and there was a teacher assigned to see that we were all in bed by that time. The second year I was at Crossnore, Ramey Beam, Frank Phillips, another boy, and I shared a room. We had two double-deck army bunks and a small round cast iron coal stove in our room. We worked out a plan for each boy to set an alarm, get up and build a fire in the stove one week each month. We also took turns sleeping on the top bunk, the lower being more desirable. One cold winter morning Frank went back to sleep after the first bell. We others were up, but dressed quietly and let him sleep. When the second, or breakfast bell rang, we all counted to three then yelled, “Frank!” as loudly as we could. He rose up on that top bunk, jumped out and hit the floor so hard in his bare feet that he roared with pain and hobbled about all day.

Sometimes at night we were still awake when the lights went out at ten. We would sit around our little stove in the dark and talk in low voices. Often I would get my homemade banjo and softly strum for an hour or more. Archie McKay was a tall, Ichabod Crane-type teacher in a seersucker suit and droopy bow tie. He had a room in one end of the boys’ dormitory and was given the duty of seeing that we went to bed at the proper time. Sometimes, when I would be playing banjo after ten, the other boys would listen for his step on the stair. When they signalled me, I would stop until he went away. One night he tiptoed up with a flashlight and caught us. I know the color drained from my face, and I was glad it was dark. To our surprise, he just gave us a short lecture and left. “It’s not that I don’t like your music,” he said. “My job is to see that things quiet down this time of night.”

Like many other teachers at Crossnore, he always encouraged me to continue playing and singing mountain songs. Sometimes on weekends we were invited to come up to the “teacherage”—as the living quarters for teachers were called—for square dancing. Occasionally other local musicians played, and teachers and students danced. If no other music was on hand, I played my harmonica and guitar—a sort of one-man band. The encouragement from teachers and Mrs. Sloop in learning to do square dancing, singing, etc. helped many a mountain boy and girl to overcome bashfulness and become more sociable and outgoing.

Living in the dormitory taught us how to take care of our clothes, our rooms, and our personal hygiene. At home many boys had been able to throw clothes on the floor, never sweep a room and take baths only when they felt like it. At Crossnore Miss Mary Gordon Greenlee, a registered nurse and a charming, still unmarried lady, inspected our rooms daily. She took temperatures if we felt sick, put us in the infirmary if needed, and she reported on our cleanliness and general appearance. They had a system of demerits as penalties for trouble-making or disobedience of rules. I had read a biography of the beloved Southern hero Robert E. Lee just before going to Crossnore. He finished the entire course of study at West Point and graduated at the head of his class without receiving a single demerit. I was determined to emulate him at Crossnore and barely succeeded in doing so.

In my studies at school I got along well in English, history, Latin, and agriculture but did poorly in math. This is strange, because math was my father's favorite subject. It may well be that it was because I did not admire my math teacher. Early in my first year at Crossnore I made the mistake of going to the blackboard in Hattie Hammond's class to do a problem with a large wad of gum in my mouth. That vinegary old maid let me know in no uncertain terms that she did not "entertain the goat family" in her classes. This was so embarrassing to me in front of the group that I developed a sort of mental block about the whole subject.

Mrs. Herndon, a snowy-haired lady from Illinois who taught English, was fond of assigning oral reports. Once or twice a week she would have us pick an article on current events from the old *Literary Digest* magazine and give the class in our own words a review of it. I was shy at the beginning, but after I saw how much trouble most of the other members of the class were having in giving a coherent oral report, I soon began to gain confidence and enjoy the course.

Such success led to my being singled out during my junior year to take part in a debate as part of the assembly program one Friday. The other debater they picked was a senior named Norris Dellinger. The debate was scheduled to take place before the entire student body and faculty. I tried my best to get them to pick someone else but did not succeed. We had no public speaking courses in those days, and the thought of giving a speech and rebuttal in front of the entire school was terrifying. Old Mrs. Herndon said, "Scott, you are not a quitter. You are not going to back down and run away because the other debater is a senior." I told her I had no fear of the other boy but was afraid to face the audience. She said, "Nonsense. I know you will give a good speech and be a winner." I saw there was no way out, so I got busy on my speech. For some reason they let us do it without suggestions or

coaching. On the big day, my stomach was queasy and my knees shaking, but I put up a brave front and went ahead. Strangely, after the first few sentences, I calmed down and finished in good shape. The subject was "Resolved: that the road to Spruce Pine should be built through Brushy Creek Valley instead of Three Mile Valley." I lost the debate to an older, more experienced opponent, but the road was built down Three Mile Valley anyhow. And I had a good learning experience.

Mrs. Sloop always needed money to keep the boarding school going and thought of various schemes to raise funds. One winter she decided to send a troupe on a tour "down state" to tell city folks about Crossnore. The group consisted of representatives of weaving and mountain crafts, students and teachers who sang and played band instruments, Reverend McCoy Franklin, who did bird imitations and comedy skits, and Howard Franklin and I to play string music and sing. We gave programs at a number of schools in downstate towns. The crowds were good and seemed to enjoy our programs. This was my first taste of being "on the road," and I enjoyed it thoroughly. We rode in cars driven by teachers and were given lodging and meals in the homes of friends of Mrs. Sloop. I heard nothing about how successful the week's tour was in raising money for the school. But looking back, I know it was fine training for us students who had scarcely ever been out of the county before. Another plus for Mrs. Sloop and Crossnore School. On the trips between towns I rode with four lady teachers in Miss Greenlee's Buick. She drove and we others talked and sang. I was lucky to be with two of the Freeman girls, members of a fine Piedmont family who loved to sing and kept things lively at all times with gay chatter in their soft Carolina accents. They knew all kinds of music, from light opera and folk songs to the latest hits such as "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue" and "Yes Sir, That's My Baby" or "That's My Weakness Now." On stage Howard Franklin played "Sourwood Mountain" on a homemade banjo with my guitar accompaniment. I sang "On Top of Old Smokey," "Here Rattler, Here," and "My Little Home in Tennessee."

Sports at Crossnore School in those days consisted mostly of baseball and basketball. Football had barely been heard of in the mountains at that time. I "went out" for the basketball team because that was by far the most popular sport. At Riverside we had played on an outdoor court and had many a skinned knee from the gravelly dirt. We could only play in warm dry weather, never in the wintertime. At Crossnore our carpentry crew helped finish the new gymnasium where we could practice and play the year around. At the beginning of the season all boys signing up for the team were marched over to Dr. Sloop's tiny office for a physical examination. He was a big man who moved and talk-

ed slowly and always wore a full beard like General Grant. I was sixteen years old but had never been examined by a doctor in my life and was terrified of such an unknown procedure. The doctor had us all strip down to shorts, thumped our chests, took blood pressure, looked in our ears, noses and other openings, had us walk a straight line, stand on one foot and various other things, somewhat embarrassing in front of the group. We knew we had passed when we were called to come to practice.

Crossnore had some good teams during those years and was able to win over most of the nearby schools. Many of the players were older boys who stayed on in high school year after year just to play ball; or possibly they were simply unable to make passing grades and graduate. They were larger and more mature than some of us who passed each year. I enjoyed the practice work and all, but the best I could do was play center or guard on the second team. Still, I was able to go on trips to other schools and play as substitute occasionally in big games. On our team Dock and Odell Aldridge were brothers who were considered two of the best in western North Carolina. One year we went all the way to the regional finals in Asheville before being beaten.

Our life in the dormitory at Crossnore was fun, but I was glad to be one of the lucky ones who had a family to visit on weekends and to live with during summers. Some of the students were orphans or came from broken homes and stayed the year round. On Fridays Lee Carpenter and I would ride the bus to Altamont and walk the rest of the way home. Or, if we had a ball game or other activity Friday night, we walked the entire six miles on Saturday mornings. In walking all the way, we took the road to Pyatte and Big Meadows Church, came across Buck Hill, down what is now Little Buck Hill Road, across by the Aith Taylor place, by the old Childs place and on home. This was a narrow, shady trail with few gates to open and fences to climb. We could stop, bend down and drink out of a clear branch here and there and make the six-mile trip on our young legs without even feeling tired. I would spend the weekend with the folks and either make the hike back to Crossnore Sunday afternoon or get up in time to walk three miles and catch the bus on Monday morning.

The Crossnore years were a broadening experience in many ways. We came in contact with students and teachers from other areas outside our mountain county and were able to learn about their ways and speech. We were given vocational training, religious training, and experience in music as well as scholastic fundamentals. During my senior year members of the faculty decided to produce an operetta. They selected "The Gypsy Rover," and I was chosen to sing the title role. We practiced with a pianist every spare minute for many weeks getting ready to make this the big entertainment date of the year. There was

not a girl in school who could or would sing the heroine's part, so one of the teachers had to do it. The big night arrived, the auditorium filled with people, and we stood back stage with butterflies in our stomachs ready to begin. I was almost six feet tall then but weighed 130 pounds. The teacher who was to play my sweetheart and heroine was short, much older, and rather plumpish of figure. We must have looked pretty comical on stage holding hands and singing romantic gypsy love songs. But nobody laughed at us, and we hadn't the slightest idea how bad we were. In fact we thought we were pretty good, especially when we were invited to give a repeat performance at Cranberry High School on the far side of the county. We must have had good directors and an efficient curtain and stage crew, for both performances went off without any serious hitches.

Our senior class went on several picnics and other outings, which were usually organized by classmate Ann Brown, on whom I had a terrific crush. But I was too shy to do much more than write her notes and choose her for a partner occasionally in a square dance. I seldom ever had an opportunity to join in the dancing, because the others always insisted that I bring my guitar and harmonica along to play while they kicked up their heels. They usually asked me to sing "Betsy Brown," and would join in on the refrain, changing the name to "Annie Brown" just to embarrass me. Ann was a member of one of the leading families in the county, pretty, and mischievous. During study hall she sat a few rows back of me and would go to the pencil sharpener at the front of the room every few minutes and stop if the teacher was not looking to give me a teasing nudge or tap on the shoulder. After we graduated, we wrote letters for a while, but I never saw her again.

Another experience that I remember which happened while I was in high school was participating in a fiddler's convention at Cranberry during one summer during vacation. A Mr. Stone, who taught agriculture, planned it and arranged to have Fiddlin' John Carson from Georgia to come as featured attraction. By that time his singing and fiddling on records had made him quite famous. More than a fiddler's convention, this program included all kinds of musical instruments, players, and singers. A neighbor boy who knew I could play and sing invited me to go along over to Cranberry where he was a student and enter the contest. By being a contestant I got in free and was able to hear all the other performers while waiting my turn. When it came, I walked out with my harmonica and guitar, sat on a chair, and sang "Here Rattler, Here." The crowd gave me a rousing round of applause, but I won no money since there was no provision for a guitar-harmonica player-singer among the various prizes.

Because of the compliments and applause received, I went home feeling good anyway, and the following week was invited to go along

and share the grand prize, a bus trip to Washington, D.C. The winning fiddle player, guitar picker, a string band, and ten or twelve members of Mr. Stone's agriculture class made the trip in a school bus driven by Arnold Wiseman. We went first to Richmond, Virginia, where we broadcast a thirty-minute program over station WRVA. The string band played, Hodge Greer gave a short talk on the history of Avery County, and I sang two songs, my first time on radio. The bus took us on to Washington, where we spent a few days living in an old army barracks and going around to visit various historical sights, including Lincoln Memorial, the Smithsonian Institution, and George Washington's home, Mount Vernon. The Avery County Superintendent of Schools, a Mr. Teague, and his small son were with us. Little Shearon Teague stood watching the guard march stiffly back and forth in front of the Grave of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery then looked up at his father and said, "Daddy, what's the matter with that man?" We had a big laugh out of that.

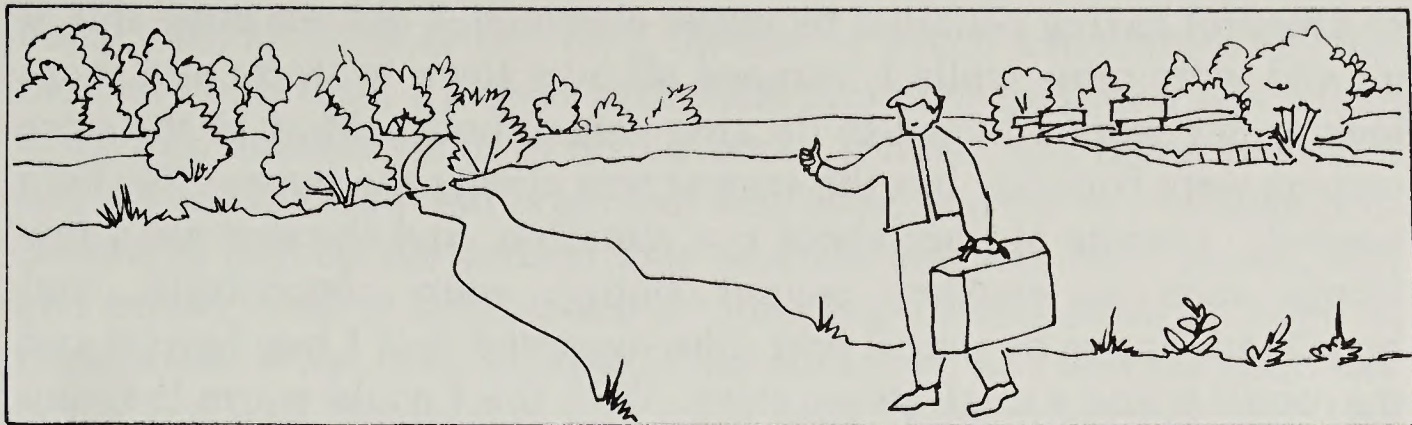
I remember that we cooked our meals in a kitchen at the army barracks and stopped to cook beside the road on the way there. I doubt if there was enough money for us to eat at restaurants. One night we all went to see a movie and vaudeville show at the big Fox Theatre downtown. Most of us had never seen such a plush theatre or a vaudeville show. We sat high in the balcony and enjoyed every minute of it. Next day Mr. Stone had arranged for the entertainers in the group to come back, before the theatre opened, and have an audition. We were met at the stage door by a couple of sharply dressed men who called us "hillbillies" and herded us onto the big stage to do our "act." We felt pretty small and lonely out there in that huge empty theatre with no friendly faces out front to give encouragement. When we finished, the fiddle player said, "We're too small fish for this big pond." He was right, for this was the first time I heard talent scouts say, "Don't call us. We'll call you if we can use you." Of course we never heard from them. However, about fifteen years later Lulu Belle and I played there as headliners with a WLS National Barn Dance Show.

On our way home from Washington, we came by way of Raleigh, N.C., and visited the State Prison, the Governor's Mansion, Capitol Building, etc. I remember that Aaron Wiseman, a man from our neighborhood, was in prison there serving a sentence for murder. He was a trusty and came out dressed in clean overalls to visit and talk with our group. He had originally been sentenced to death, but his sentence had been changed to a long prison term. Still claiming innocence of the crime of murder, he told us he was sentenced on circumstantial evidence but that he had committed other crimes for which he deserved punishment. He had spent everything he owned fighting his case, including his six thousand acre farm—some of the

best land in Avery County. Aaron was released a few years later and went directly to Columbus, Ohio, to spend the rest of his days with his son Little Aaron.

During one of my last years at Crossnore, the principal, Mr. Stroup, called me and Ramey Beam, another boy from my neighborhood to his office. We had no inkling what he wanted, but it turned out that we were offered the job of sweeping the building, which at that time housed the high school and upper grade classes. He told us this job would take the place of carpentry and other work and that he was offering it to us because he knew we were dependable and would never fail to sweep the classrooms every day. And there was a big raise in pay involved. We would each get twenty dollars a month in addition to our room and board for the five school days each week. That was more money than either us had ever made, and we snapped up the offer. But we soon found that it was hard work sweeping all those old hardwood oiled floors and carrying out trash from so many wastebaskets. My partner found it easier to do stooping and sweeping work, because he was rather short. My height made it a bit harder for me. But in spite of the hard work we missed not a day, and that twenty dollars went a long way during the twenties. It was a great feeling to have money in our pockets for the first time in our lives.

Our senior class at Crossnore in 1927 consisted of twenty-one students. Although I did not expect it, they elected me president of the class. All this amounted to was that I acted as chairman at a few meetings where we selected class rings, and I made a little speech at the junior-senior banquet and at graduation exercises. We always had a teacher-sponsor at these meetings to guide us and smooth the way, which made things much easier for a self-conscious person such as I was in those days.



Duke University and Travels Down State

After graduation from Crossnore High School I worked on my father's farm during the summer but visited the school from time to time to talk with Mrs. Sloop about plans for the future. I remember she told me I had a knack for speaking in public and said, "We must try to send you on to school somewhere where you can develop that talent." Trinity College at Durham had just changed its name to Duke University because of a huge endowment it received from James B. and Washington Duke, the tobacco millionaires. There had been lots of publicity in the newspapers about this. I told Mrs. Sloop I would enroll at Duke that fall. She had friends at Durham through her membership in Daughters of the American Revolution and made arrangements for me to stay at the home of a Mrs. Gilbert. I was to mow her lawn, fire the furnace, help care for two boys under ten, and do other chores in exchange for a room at her home. I hoped to get a job waiting tables at the college dining room and have meals there.

While not busy otherwise that summer I cut a few wagon loads of pulpwood on the farm and sold it for about thirty dollars. That was all I had when I hitched a ride to Marion, twenty-five miles down the mountain and boarded a train for Durham. As I remember, the coach fare was five dollars from Marion to Durham, approximately 200 miles. Mrs. Gilbert met me at the train and drove me to her home in a 1926 Chevrolet sedan. I was surprised to find that she was not a rich city lady but lived in a small rented house and with the wife of an advertising salesman who was rarely ever at home. My room was small but clean and close enough to the old Duke campus that I could walk to classes. I got along nicely with the chores she assigned me but was unable to land the table-waiting job for meals. They were already taken by other self-help students. With hardly any money left, I had to find some way to eat. As freshmen at the university, we were forced to wear a ridiculous-looking beanie cap wherever we went or be subjected

to dreadful hazing penalties by upper classmen. I did not mind this at all and wore mine while I tramped all over town to stores and shops looking for work I hoped to do after school hours. Most of the store owners were friendly, but the answer was always the same—"No help needed." I wrote Mother about my situation, and she sent me a few things such as cookies, peanut butter, soup concentrate, and homemade fudge by parcel post. She suggested that I buy lettuce and mayonnaise and a small sterno stove. With this I could warm the soup concentrate and eat some meals in my room.

Mrs. Gilbert had heard me practicing on my Sears Roebuck guitar in my room and made arrangements for me to sing for a young people's group at her church. They liked my singing, and through it I met a Duke math professor, Dr. Rankin, who asked if I would like to have a job mowing his lawn that fall and firing his furnace during the winter. Winters in the area were so mild that they allowed the fire to die down at bedtime each night. What he needed was someone to come in around five o'clock in the morning, shake down the grates in the old hand-fired coal furnace, throw in fresh kindling and coal, and get the fire going before his family got out of bed. I had an old alarm clock and was glad to get the job.

The minister of the church where I had sung for the youth group made arrangements for me to sing for the Durham Kiwanis club. They gave me five dollars, the most I had ever made from my music. After that I had a number of calls from clubs and organizations to entertain, for which I usually got five dollars and sometimes a free meal.

My landlady was not happy about my cooking and eating in my room. She said it smelled up the house and that food left in her dresser drawers gave them a rancid odor. I let her know that if I did not do it, I would have to quit school and go home. She allowed me to continue, provided I would keep lining in the drawers and be extra careful to let nothing spoil. In shopping for food I found that I could go down town to a market—about a ten block walk—on Saturday nights just before closing time and get bargains in lettuce, bananas, and sweet tokay grapes. Sardines were only a dime a can in those days, and a glass of peanut butter fifteen cents. There was no sales tax.

Occasionally Dr. Rankin and his wife would ask me to come to their home and stay with their three small children while they spent the day visiting relatives in Thomasville. For this I got some extra money to spend on food. In later years I realized that they must have had great confidence in me—an eighteen year old—to trust me with a little girl and her two brothers, all under eight years. I got along just fine with them, having helped with my own younger sister and brothers at home. But there was one exception. The kids had a playroom in the

home with all kinds of fine toys, the like of which a mountain boy like me had never seen. I played with them and their toys for a while then went into another room to read a book. While I was there, the older boy invited the Gant kid over from next door, and the two of them proceeded to pile up the smaller kids' wooden wagons, cars, trucks, etc. and smash them to smithereens by jumping up and down on them in their boots. What to do about it, I did not know. So I sent the Gant boy home and took the Rankin kids for a walk. When their parents came home, the younger children went running to tell mama what had happened. Dr. Rankin, a kindly, soft-spoken man, said nothing; Mrs. Rankin asked me what I was doing while the kids broke the toys. I felt awful but told her truthfully I would never had left them alone for a few minutes if I had known they would do such a thing. The Rankins were such understanding people that the matter was never mentioned again until I brought up what a sad failure I had been as a baby sitter, when I wrote her years later from Chicago.

On Thanksgiving that year a student waiter I knew at Duke asked if I would like to take his place at the dining hall while he went on vacation. I was pretty awkward carrying trays but managed to get by without accident and had a few good meals in the bargain. At Christmas time I wanted very much to go home for the ten-day vacation but did not have enough money for train fare. I had met a graduate law student named Wallace who lived in Statesville, a town on my way to the mountains. I had sung for him at an attorney's dinner. He was older, a member of a prominent Jewish family, and seemed to take a good deal of interest in me. When he found out I wanted to go home for Christmas, he suggested that I hitch hike to Statesville, spend the night with his family, and catch rides the rest of the way the next day. I put on a clean shirt, took my old handbag, wore my Duke beanie cap, and stood with thumb in air early that frosty morning beside Route 70 outside Durham. In those days people still trusted each other; they had a habit of stopping along the roads to help people in trouble and were mighty good about picking up college students on their way to and from school. It was not long before a traveling salesman came by driving alone and told me to hop in. We had a long friendly conversation as he drove. He complimented me on trying to get an education and said before we parted, "Some day you'll probably be a United State Senator." It took only three or four hitches to get me to Statesville and the home of the Wallace family. They gave me a warm welcome, a fine evening meal, and left me and their teen-age daughter alone in the parlor afterward to talk. But I was not much of a conversationalist, especially with girls I had barely met. She must have been disappointed, for her older brother kidded me about it when I next saw him.

After a good night's sleep in a soft warm bed and breakfast at the Wallace home, I felt more confident about hitch hiking and was able to make it as far as Marion without much trouble. There were fewer cars and trucks on the road as I approached the mountains near home, so I started on my way walking. Fortunately, a man from Crossnore caught up with me a few miles further on and gave me a ride to the crossroads about two miles from home. I had been away more than three months for the first time ever, and it was a fine feeling to be there by the old fireside again with Mother and Dad. No doubt every youngster is plagued by homesickness when he first leaves the place where he grew up. I had it too, but mine was probably less severe because of having stayed away while living in the dormitory at Crossnore School, thus growing gradually accustomed to it.

When it came time to go back to Duke around the first of January, we were having a spell of very cold winter weather. My folks did not want me standing by the road hitching rides, and somehow managed to come up with enough money for me to take the train back to Durham. For some reason we arrived in that town several hours later than scheduled. I had written Mrs. Gilbert that I would be back to my room that day but was expected early in the evening. When I finally got to the station and walked the ten or twelve blocks to her home, it was almost midnight. The house was dark, the door locked, and I had no key. I knocked a few times but got no answer. It was one of the coldest nights of the winter, but I decided the best thing to do was to walk back downtown to the station and wait until morning. It was warm in the waiting room, but there was no place to sleep; all the benches had arms with room only for a person to sit upright between them. I sat down and dozed for a while, then the old black porter came around, woke me up, and asked me what I was doing there that time of night. After I explained, he shuffled off leaving me to doze again on that hard bench. When morning came I walked back to my room, cleaned up, had a bite to eat and went to school. When one is eighteen and healthy, he can stand an experience like that and snap back quickly. No use denying it, I was a bit droopy in class next day.

I know there were other students who were working their way and having trouble staying in school that year. But by far the larger number, on the other hand, were well supplied with clothes, lived in the fine new dormitories, and had spending money in their pockets. As a freshman living off campus, I belonged to no fraternities, had no part in the social life there and little recreation except for going to church on Sunday and an occasional movie on Saturday night, whenever I had the price of the twenty-five cents admission. Some students had their own cars and spent much of their time riding around, having dates, and doing what was called "making whoopee." Having little else to do,

I spent lots of time studying, and my grades showed it. I made "A's" and "B's" in history, English literature, French, and zoology. I passed my old bugaboo math, making only a "D" in trigonometry.

Other things I remember about my year at Duke are the assembly programs every Thursday in the clean, new auditorium. They had fine music by faculty and older students and occasionally dramatic presentations by traveling groups. Graduate students and professors from the Methodist divinity school often spoke. They were so much better than the preachers in the mountains that I always enjoyed their talks and made it a point to be on hand to hear them. Instead of the old fundamentalist type of hellfire and brimstone message, they gave positive, inspirational talks. Their speech sounded different, too. There, for the first time I began to hear the difference between the crisp sound of a well-educated midwesterner and the flat, slurring sound of the southerner.

Near the close of my first year at Duke, I began to think of a way to earn enough money to pay my way the following year. There was a great deal of construction work going on at the huge new campus, located a few miles from the old Trinity campus, which was to become the women's school when the men's campus was completed. One of the deans of the university was Dr. Flowers, a friend of Mrs. Sloop. I mustered up enough courage to go to his office, wait until I could see him, and ask him if he would recommend me for a summer job with a construction crew. He gave me the name of a foreman, and I walked a few miles over to see him as soon as summer vacation began. He asked what kind of work I could do. I said, "I was raised on a mountain farm and can do a little bit of everything." He looked disappointed, but after thinking it over said to come back Monday morning at seven and he would start me as a carpenter's helper. What I should have told him was that I had had shop training and could do rough carpentry work. But at that age I was too naive to try any bluffing.

On Monday another student about my age and I were shown a huge pile of lumber, given hammers and wrecking bars, told to pull out all the nails in it and stack it in a neat pile nearby. The work was not too hard but became awfully monotonous after a few days. I made arrangements to get room and board at the home of a Mrs. Bowen, who lived nearby in a small bungalow and kept a few boarders. My pay was thirty-five cents an hour, and I figured I could save about thirty dollars a month. As the summer wore on, the weather got hotter and hotter, the work got harder and harder, and the food at our boarding house worse and worse. Where we worked, in a flat, pine wood area, the temperature was near ninety during the day and did not cool down at night as it does in the mountains. The water was far from the cold, clear liquid from a mountain spring. We were given the back-

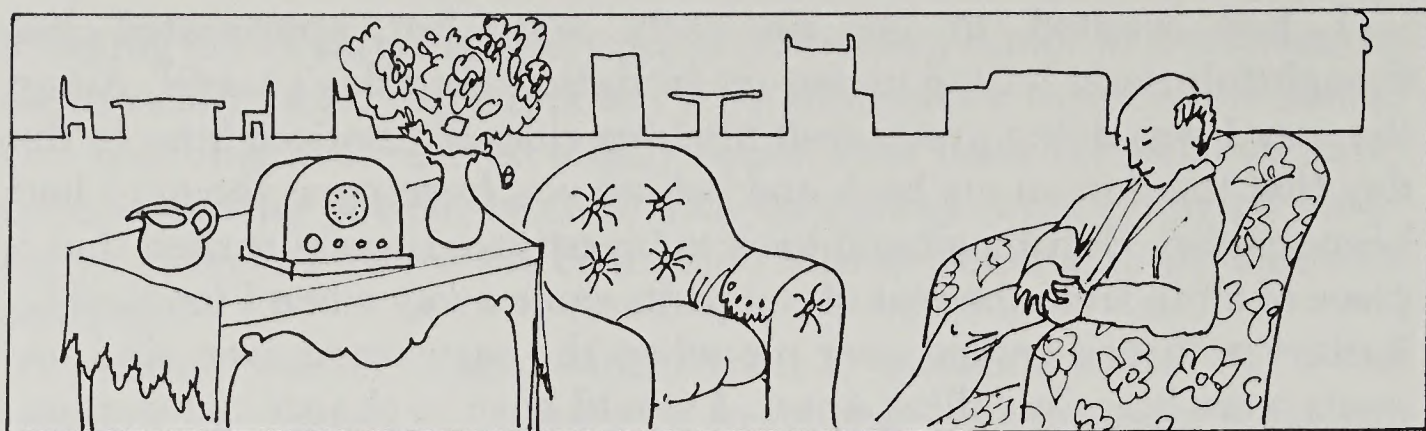
breaking job of carrying heavy green timbers up ramps to workmen, in the scorching heat. Our shoulders were rubbed raw inside a few hours. Our boarding house served mostly beans, stew beef, fatback and pale, tasteless baking powder biscuits with thin gravy. I found myself longing as never before for the cool green hills of home and my mother's cooking.

Another worker, slightly older than I, owned a model "T" Ford roadster, and lived in Hickory, a town only seventy miles from my home. He often talked about his girl friend back home, showed us her picture, and spoke of going there for a weekend visit. I told him I would pay for gasoline and oil for the trip if he would take me as far as Hickory. I would hitch hike the rest of the way to visit my folks. One Saturday afternoon we drew our meager pay, loaded our bags, and started out. North Carolina highways during the late twenties were still crooked, narrow, and in spots still unpaved. There were detours, missing bridges, and potholes here and there. Sometime before midnight we were still a long way from Hickory and on a detour. Coming down a hill, we hit a sharp curve, the little car slid on some gravel, and when Miller applied the brake, flipped over. There we were upside down beside a lonely road, under the car. But fortunately, neither of us was seriously hurt. Miller crawled out first, and being a deeply religious fellow, started praying for the Lord to see us through this accident. After a bit of digging I got out and stood up. Miller had lost his pocketbook with the precious picture of his girl friend in it and started frantically crawling around, feeling and searching, saying, "I've got to find my girl's picture." In a few minutes we located the billfold just under the edge of the car, he calmed down somewhat, and we began considering what to do next. The car did not appear to have suffered too much damage, and we thought it might run if we could turn it upright. Shortly afterwards we saw lights approaching; what a welcome sight! Two men in an old pickup truck pulled up and got out. They thought the four of us could turn the little model "T" back on its wheels. Sure enough we did so without trouble. The steering wheel was somewhat bent, but when we replaced the cushions and stepped on the starter, the motor caught up and sounded all right. Thanking the two men for their help, we got in and drove down the road. Soon the engine started spouting steam. Most of the water had run out of the radiator while it was upside down. We stopped at a farm house, got those folks out of bed to beg water and drove on to Hickory. Miller's mother listened to our story, gave us a few kind words and a snack, and sent us off to bed. Next thing I knew it was nine o'clock, and she had breakfast ready.

I had wanted to get an early start but appreciated her thoughtfulness in letting us rest up from that hard day's travel. Along the way I was doing pretty well hitching rides but noticed later in the day that the skin on my back and behind was burning as though I had been scalded. Putting a hand back to investigate I was surprised that a piece of cloth from the seat of my pants came away when I touched it. Battery acid had spilled over me when the car turned over, and my pants were literally falling apart. I would have to change pants or expose my hind end to passers-by in a short time. I missed a couple of rides as I walked on looking for a place to change but soon came to a culvert where I took off the old pants, washed a bit, changed, and got back to the highway. Good thing I had an extra pair of pants in the old hand bag. Otherwise I could have been arrested for indecent exposure.

When I got home, it felt so good to be back with the folks in the cool, green mountains that I decided I would stay on the farm for a while and try to find outside work to earn some money. There was plenty of feldspar in rocky ledges on Dad's farm, and there was a market for it in the nearby town of Spruce Pine. My older brother, Carl, who had married a teacher and lived nearby, suggested that we go in partnership with a neighbor and open a feldspar mine. Mining was done by hand in those days. Our tools consisted of wheelbarrows, shovels, picks, crowbars, some drills which we drove with sledge hammers like those used by the famous John Henry in the song, some dynamite, and plenty of muscle power. We made cuts into the hillside, drilled holes for dynamite, blasted down the mixture of rock and feldspar, separated the ore from rock with cobbling hammers, repaired the road to the mine, and sent for a truck to come take our 'spar to a buyer in town. It was hard work, but we had good water to drink, pure air to breathe, and cool nights for sleeping. By the time we paid for supplies and the trucker for hauling, we did well to make twenty-five cents an hour for our work.

We had to close down our mine that winter because of bad weather and the condition of the trucking road. I helped Dad with farm work and made some improvements in the house for Mother. At that time very few country homes had running water or bathrooms. The old "Chick Sale" type privy out back was still in use by almost every family. In earlier days we carried our drinking water in pails from a spring. Dad and I had later dug a ditch by hand and piped a cold spring from almost 2000 feet up on the side of Doe Hill. It came only as far as the backyard. That winter I bought Mother a sink and piped water to her kitchen.



Fair Times in West Virginia

My oldest brother, Earle, had worked his way through Berea College in Kentucky, gone on to medical school in Indiana and become a doctor. I wanted to find a place where I could continue in school without all the hardships I experienced at Duke. Earle agreed to write to Berea and ask them to let me enroll there. I got application blanks, filled them out and sent them in, but for some reason which I did not understand, Berea College did not accept me. Earle's roommate while he was at Berea was Bradley Kincaid, who had gone on to Chicago and become a big-time radio star, singing old mountain songs and playing his "hound dog" guitar. Earle had told Bradley he had a younger brother who knew lots of songs of that type. Bradley came to Crossnore and to our home while on vacation that summer, looking for new material for song books he was selling on his radio programs. He asked me to sing for him, and before he left I gave him about two dozen songs I knew. He told me I was good enough to be on radio and asked me to go back to Chicago with him. I said I wanted to go on to college and do something more than just picking and singing all my life. Bradley took the songs I gave him and published another booklet, of which he sold tens of thousands.

Lambert Johnson, who had lived in Crossnore, was with Bradley that summer. He was secretary-manager of the YMCA in Fairmont, West Virginia, and offered to let me come to that town, work for him, and enroll at Fairmont Teacher's College. I was glad to have such an offer and began to make plans to find a way to get there by the time school opened that fall. Aunt Lottie, Uncle Robert Wiseman's wife, took in summer boarders those days at "Sunnybrook Farm," just a few miles from our home. She invited me to come for dinner frequently and had me sing for her guests afterwards. I had met some folks from New York City at her place. Hearing I was looking for a way to go to Fairmont, they suggested that I ride with them up to Winchester, Virginia, and take the train from there. They traveled in two cars, one

owned and driven by an unmarried lady who was an interior decorator from New York. She surprised me by arranging for me to ride the last part of the trip with her. Until then I had no idea she felt romantic about me, but she suggested that we separate from the other folks and go on alone to New York or any place I would like to go with her. No doubt she had money and was fairly good-looking, but was a good deal older, and I had no romantic feelings toward her. It was embarrassing to me. I wanted to stay on good terms and was flattered by her interest, so I told her I had promised to go on to Fairmont and continue in school and that I did not want to break a promise. It was never mentioned to her friends in the other car.

We said goodbye at the railroad station in Winchester, and after a two-hour wait I boarded a train going westward across the mountains. It was a dirty old train with a coal-burning locomotive which puffed its way in and out of tunnels, sending fine black dust back through the old coaches where the passengers sat. Fortunately, it was not crowded. I had a seat to myself and was able to lay my head on my suitcase and catch a few short naps after darkness came.

It was midnight when the old conductor yelled, "Fairmont, next stop." Knowing the YMCA where I was to live would be closed at that hour, I asked a porter where I could get a room for the night. He directed me to an old hotel. The sleepy desk clerk looked me over and would assign me a room only if I paid in advance the sum of two dollars. Later, I found out it was a flophouse frequented by tramps and prostitutes. But nobody bothered me. I was tired enough to sleep anywhere. Next morning I walked about eight blocks to the YMCA carrying my baggage and guitar.

The Fairmont YMCA at that time was a combination hotel, athletic club, and social gathering place. On the first floor was the lobby with tables, chairs, reading lamps and a few leather-covered sofas. The office, with a counter-type desk where the keys were kept and room assignments made, was near the center. In the back was the gymnasium, separated from the lobby by a storage room and closets. In the basement area there was a swimming pool, men's locker room, and bowling alleys. On the second floor above the lobby was a kitchen and dining room, a meeting room, and several bedrooms. The third floor was all bedrooms. There was no elevator. I was assigned a small single room on the third floor. The ceiling over the lobby was high, and the three flights of stairs were long and steep, but we young folks took them two at a time.

Lambert Johnson, my friend from Crossnore, was officially local secretary of the YMCA, which was then a nation-wide organization and much stronger than it is now. Actually, he was manager in charge of the entire Fairmont operation. He was still a bachelor, who had attended Berea College and gone on to Chicago for additional training in

that type work. The whole thing was entirely new to me, but he gave me a tour of the building, introduced me to the help, including the janitor, cook, athletic director and others, and explained what my duties would be. Among these was cleaning the swimming pool each week; also to handle the front desk, answer the telephone, assign rooms, and make collection for room rent. Later, I was to help pin setting in the bowling lanes. That was long before automatic pin setters were developed. I told him I would be glad to do janitorial work or any kind of physical jobs but dreaded assigning rooms, answering telephones, and managing the front desk. There were many names of people calling up that I couldn't even pronounce. He worked things out so I could be assistant to a more experienced person on the desk for a while until I got the hang of it. After I came to know my way around, within a few weeks' time, the desk work was much easier and more interesting. I could read and study a bit during slow periods, and it was there that I first started learning to use a typewriter. After a time I knew the names of most of the regular members and customers who came in to rent rooms. These included a number of "traveling salesman" who liked to take advantage of our low room rent—interesting men who would stop by the desk before going to bed and tell me stories they had heard during their travels.

There were no regular meals served at the "Y" those days. The Kiwanis club met there each week, and special dinners were cooked and served in the dining room on various occasions for other organizations. It was during one of these dinners that I got into trouble over money. In selling tickets for meals, we kept the receipts and change in a drawer just under the countertop behind the desk in front of the office. I had sold over a hundred dollars' worth of tickets and put the receipts in the drawer, which had a spring latch that would open easily if you knew where to grab it. When I left the desk to run an errand, I should have put the money in a safe we had in the rear but failed to do so. When I came back about ten minutes later, the money was gone. I was stunned, to put it mildly, and did not know what in the world to do. Thinking and hoping Mr. Johnson had taken the money, I told him about it as soon as he came back down from the dining room. But he was as puzzled as I was.

At that time I was barely making enough to buy food and the clothes I had to have. There was no way I could pay back the loss, and I got very little sleep that night. Next day Mr. Johnson told me I should stop feeling guilty—just be more careful in the future. Before the month was gone we found out what had happened to the money. A short time earlier a new physical director had been hired by Fairmont "Y" directors. He was a handsome, well-built fellow from Pennsylvania, with a ready smile and pleasant personality. He was doing a

good job conducting gym classes, coaching ball and tennis teams, and teaching swimming. For some reason Mr. Johnson did not like the man. I could not understand just why. Later it became known that he ran up bills at various places in town and did not pay. Every time we left any cash in the desk, it would disappear, even nickels and dimes from the sale of candy in the little showcase we had behind the counter. One day the other clerk hid himself back in the office and caught the gym teacher in the act. He was called before the board and dismissed the next day. Needless to say, I was relieved because I had been dreadfully afraid someone thought I had been doing the stealing.

A few weeks after my arrival in Fairmont, I was asked to sing at the Rotary Club luncheon held in the dining room of the one big hotel in town. As usual, I was not at all sure I could perform well enough to please all those doctors, ministers, and well-heeled businessmen. But it went well, and afterwards Mr. A.M. "Shad" Rowe, owner of the local radio station, was among those who came around with complimentary remarks. At my first meeting with Mr. Rowe, I had no inkling of the effect this man was to have on my future. He told me he would like to have me broadcast a program of my songs and called the following week to set the time. He and his partner owned the Holt-Rowe Novelty Company consisting of two stores and radio station WMMN. The stores were actually what are now known as variety stores. They sold radios, stationery, office supplies, greeting cards and other novelties.

Shad Rowe was a peppy little blond man of Welsh descent who liked spicy stories, poker games, and good bourbon. He had been a court reporter, was a whiz at shorthand, and had been secretary to West Virginia Senator Matthew Mansfield Neely in Washington. The senator had used his influence to help Shad get the license to open a Fairmont radio station. The call letters were Neely's initials with the "W" added, as was the custom. They had one small studio on the floor above the main store, but Shad had the idea of putting me and an announcer in the show window to do the broadcasts. I made a list of songs, went to the store, tuned my guitar, and handed the list to Gene Etz, the announcer. We sat in the window on Main Street that Saturday afternoon with an old crystal microphone, the kind that hang by coil springs in a small hoop atop a metal stand. In a few minutes we had a sizeable crowd on the sidewalk watching us and listening through a speaker hanging above the front of the store. That was what they wanted—a crowd blocking the sidewalk so that everyone passing by would stop to see what was going on.

I was pretty tense during this first broadcast but sang songs I knew well, and the crowd seemed to approve. In those days the announcers did all the talking; it was the days before personality was the big thing. Musicians played their instruments, singers sang, announcers read

advertisements and gave the names of songs. It was 1929, and the radio was still in its infancy. There were only a few broadcasting stations, and even a five-hundred watt station such as WMMN reached out an unbelievable distance. A station such as WDKA in Pittsburgh had listeners all over the eastern half of the nation. Folks back home in North Carolina were able to hear us all the way from Fairmont occasionally.

After Shad Rowe let me know he wanted me to be on his station, I started thinking of a name I could use which would be easy to remember and more "catchy" than my legal name. The Asheville, N.C. area had received a good deal of publicity as a tourist resort and was known as "The Land of the Sky." I hit upon the idea of calling myself "Skyland Scotty" on radio programs. This got me lots of attention in the Fairmont area, partly because there was a famous barnstorming airplane pilot named Scotty who did all kinds of daredevil stunts at a nearby airfield. Listeners somehow got the idea we were the same person, although I had never been up in a plane in all my life. Mail began to come in quantities after my first program, many letters asking if I was the famous pilot. I had never seen so many letters and cards from strangers. I tried to answer all I could and comply with requests for songs whenever possible. Radio was such a novelty those days that people would do all kinds of things to get their names mentioned on the air. They sent me cakes, candy, cookies, pickles, and even a bottle of wine occasionally. They were easily entertained and seemed to like the simplest, older songs best. We could do a half hour program with five or six songs, answering requests, and having the announcer read off a long list of names of people who had asked for each song. Among most-requested songs were "Maple on the Hill," "Golden Slippers" and "They Cut Down the Old Pine Tree." Railroad songs such as "Old Ninety-Seven" and story-telling ballads like "Prisoner's Song" and "John Henry" drew lots of requests. I tried to include one of these on each program but spent more time doing happy-sounding mountain songs like "Pretty Little Pink," "Betsy Brown" and "Sourwood Mountain." Holt-Rowe Novelty Company apparently had good results and an increase in sales from our store window broadcasts. Shad Rowe called me aside after my third appearance and told me I would get fifteen dollars for each weekly half-hour program from then on. I went back to my room at the YMCA so happy I could hardly believe it was true.

The extra pay I got from my programs came just in time to help me get started at Fairmont College. Mr. Johnson had prepared the way for me by calling the president of the school, Dr. Joe Rosier. I went to his office for an interview and was accepted as a West Virginia resident, although I had been there only a month. This enabled me to enroll without paying a higher non-resident tuition fee. There were text-

books, writing materials, and supplies to buy, but I was able to get many of these from a store which had a book exchange.

During my first week at the college I saw a notice on a bulletin board of a meeting to organize a student YMCA. There were a number of fraternities on campus, but I had been president of the Methodist youth organization back home and thought I would rather belong to student YMCA than a fraternity. At the meeting there was a state representative from Charleston who gave a talk outlining plans for getting a student YMCA started. He asked if anyone present had been a member of a church youth group. I held up my hand, and he asked me to tell those present about my experience. After I finished, he opened nominations for president of the new student YMCA. I was nominated and elected by the thirty-odd students present almost before I knew what was happening. At the next assembly program in the auditorium that week, the college dean announced that a student YMCA had been organized and that Scott Wiseman was president. Some of the teachers stopped me in the hall afterwards to congratulate me. Between classes that week I approached other students in hallways and at the cafeteria asking them to join the "Y" for an enrollment fee of twenty-five cents. We soon had a membership of around fifty-five students and were making plans for activities such as conducting worship services at assembly programs and sponsoring spaghetti dinners. What the organization did for me was to give me a sense of belonging and a feeling of confidence that enabled me to get up before the student body at assembly programs, conduct a five-minute worship service, and make announcements of our meetings. Toward the end of the year the editors of the college yearbook asked officers of the YMCA to pose for pictures, and we had a page devoted to our activities in the next edition.

There was a Methodist church a few blocks from the YMCA where I lived. I had started attending church there shortly after coming to Fairmont. During my second year there, I was asked to teach a Sunday school class of teen-age boys. I was given lesson materials, took over the class, and taught it until the year I graduated. They were a fine group of well-behaved young people and gave me a certificate of appreciation signed by all members of the class when I left.

Among the members of the student YMCA at Fairmont College was a boy of Italian parentage named Danny Ross. He had an excellent tenor voice and loved to sing. We made up a trio with another student and sometimes sang at assembly programs. Danny was a member of the YMCA and suggested a plan whereby we could earn some extra money. We got permission to clean out a small room in the main classroom building which had been used for storage of old desks and other junk. In it we opened a candy store. There was a wholesale candy company in town where we bought a variety of popular brands of candy bars

and peanuts by the case. At the end of each class period one of us would rush in to open the store and be ready for business when students came by on their way to other classes. We were agreeably surprised at the number who came in and bought one or two candy bars. Some of the teachers were also good customers. It was a way to get acquainted with everyone in the school, as well as make a fair profit.

I had been broadcasting a weekly program on radio for several months, when one day Shad Rowe asked me if I would like to try becoming an announcer. He first had me handle announcements on my own program. I was pretty tense and jerky at first and would announce the call letters of the station several times during the program, if I ran out of something to say. With more experience I must have improved, for he soon assigned me to act as master of ceremonies for a group of country musicians called the "Puddle Jumpers." Later, I announced the Carl Mackelfresh Orchestra and soon arrived at the point where I could say, "This is station WMMN atop the beautiful Hotel Fairmont," like a budding young Graham McNamee.

It was a lucky thing that I was able to get more work on radio, for the following summer Lambert Johnson left Fairmont YMCA and went to work in Newark, New Jersey. The new manager brought in his own crew and asked me to make plans to find another place to live. When my friend Danny Ross heard about it, he invited me to move into his home and occupy a room they were not using at the time. I was happy to do so and lived there with him, his elderly Italian grandmother, and a sister for about a year. They sometimes asked me to have Sunday dinner with them. We usually had a glass or two of home brew made by his grandmother, and I learned to eat their good spaghetti Italian style, winding it around a fork from a spoon held in the left hand.

In the meantime I was working at the radio station more and more, doing announcing, singing, and writing commercial advertisements. We broadcast the weekly assembly program from the college, and I was given the job of installing remote equipment at the auditorium to pick it up. On my way to school I would drive a station-owned car, take along a crank-type telephone, attach it to the telephone line back stage at the auditorium, call the engineer at the transmitter, and check the microphone to get it working properly. At the beginning of the assembly program I would turn on the equipment, walk on stage and introduce the program saying: "This is Station WMMN, Fairmont, West Virginia, broadcasting the regular weekly assembly program from the auditorium of Fairmont Teacher's College."

With the pay I was getting from the radio station and what I made from the candy store, I was able to open a savings account and add a few dollars to it each month. Then, in the midst of the great depression, the banks closed. Our advertisers had no money to pay the radio

station, and the station had none to pay singers or announcers. But Shad Rowe saved our jobs by coming up with a scheme of barter. He made a deal whereby we could get meals from a restaurant, gasoline from a service station, laundry service, and even clothes. All were paid for with radio announcements. Along with this, he managed to give us twenty-five dollars a month spending money.

The station transmitter was on the top floor of the Fairmont Hotel, occupying two rooms provided by the hotel in return for the publicity we gave them. The transmitter equipment occupied one room. The other was occupied by the engineer who ran it. When the engineer decided to get married and move out of the hotel, Shad Rowe suggested that I leave the Ross residence and move into the hotel room, a move I was delighted to make. I had never dreamed of living in the best hotel in town—never expected to be able to afford such luxury. There was daily maid service for my room and elevators with operators on duty day and night. What a change from the three-flight walk-up room without bath at the old YMCA building a few years earlier! What college boy wouldn't have liked it, especially if he were the kind that enjoyed having girls, parties, and "makin' whoopee"? But such things were still a long way in the future for me. Keeping up with studies and working at the radio station left me little time to do anything at the hotel except shower and sleep.

One of our busiest times every year was the month between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The radio station hired extra part-time salesmen to go out over our coverage area selling spot announcements and fifteen-minute or half-hour programs to stores getting ready for the Christmas rush. One day Shad Rowe and Mr. Gaynor, his chief salesman, called me in and outlined plans for me to play Santa Claus for the O.J. Morrison Department Store, both on the radio and in the store. I still weighed less than 150 pounds and tried to get out of it by saying I was not fat enough. No use. The store would provide a padded suit to make me look fat and jolly. I would come on the air each evening at six with a background recording of "Jingle Bells," give all the kiddies a "Ho, ho, ho, boys and girls. This is Santa Claus talking to you from my workshop at the north pole." I would read Christmas poems, tell little jokes, squeeze dolls that said, "Mama," dogs that barked, run trains that puffed and rang bells, and tell the kids not to forget to come and see me at the O.J. Morrison Store every night from seven to nine and all afternoon on Saturday. The fifteen-minute radio program was easy. I ho, ho, hoed, played with toys, read letters from kids with a right good will, and the time passed almost before I knew it.

How I dreaded putting on the padded suit with the beard, and talking to the youngsters in the store! But they came in droves, and after the first few interviews, my nervousness disappeared, and I began to

enjoy the children. I can still remember how they looked up at me with such confidence, hope, and awe in their faces as they told me what they wanted for Christmas. Not one of them yanked my fake beard or pulled any dirty tricks. But that padded suit was awfully hot and uncomfortable. After a half hour I would have to leave the toy section, go back among the crates and boxes of a storage room where I had dressed and pull off the beard and most of the rest of the bulky costume to cool off and recuperate. A few minutes later I would get dressed again, walk down the aisles with all the clerks yelling, "Here comes Santa Claus!" and go back to talk to more children.

Some of the older students from the college I fully expected would come in to make fun of me and expose me to the kids, but it did not happen. Some started called me "Santa Claus" on campus, but I knew it was all in fun and did not mind at all. One girl I had dated a few times said she recognized my voice on radio, listened to the program three times and kept some statistics. She told me I mentioned "boys and girls" fifty times and the O.J. Morrison Store forty times during the fifteen-minute program. I told her that the main purpose of the broadcast was to let the public hear the sponsor's name and remember to buy his products.

The Santa Claus program was a big success, but by the time it was over on Christmas Eve I was completely exhausted. The alternate sweating in the padded suit and cooling off in the storage room, along with school work and the other programs I had been doing brought on a terrific cold. I went to bed in my hotel room that night and stayed there most of the following week except to go down for an occasional light meal. I had several visitors including my friend Danny Ross, some of the other workers from the radio station, and friends from school. They brought me goodies to eat, brandy to sip, and left me feeling pretty good in spite of my cold.

During the years I spent in Fairmont, radio, which had been little more than a novelty a few years earlier, became more and more popular, drawing ever-larger listening audiences as time went on. Station owners, especially those in the smaller towns and cities, rarely paid performers for doing programs. Those who could sing, play instruments, or entertain in other ways were flattered to be allowed on the air to let their friends, relatives, and admirers hear them. At Fairmont groups of country musicians, then called "hillbillies," would come into town from Clarksburg, Elkin, Shepherd's Town, Shinnston, and sometimes from towns in western Pennsylvania, ask for auditions, and wait around for hours to go on the air for as long as we would let them. Sometimes Shad Rowe would treat them to a meal at a restaurant or pass along some of the presents sent in by fans, but usually they performed for nothing and were glad to do it. In contrast to the

way things are done now, early radio programs consisted almost entirely of live talent. In those days studios were not equipped with decks of record or tape players at all. Programs were planned in advance and included only live talent. In case the talent failed to show up on time, they usually had a standby substitute ready, such as a staff piano or organ player, or at times the announcer would simply improvise, even to just reading the daily newspaper to kill time. The necessity of having only live programs held many stations to a limited time on the air each day. Some smaller ones came on only during early evening hours. Others had a few hours in early morning, a silent period during the middle of the day, and came on again at night. Station managers believed that almost everyone worked and was away from a radio set from nine to five. As yet there were still no radios in cars. This was still a few years in the future.

When the first turntables for playing recordings were installed at WMMN, we considered it a great step forward. We could now put on brief interludes of recorded music any time the live talent was late arriving or when we needed to close the microphones while moving band or musical instruments into the studio. At first we played old-type ten-inch discs at 78 r.p.m. speed. There were a few twelve-inch recordings by symphony orchestras and operatic groups, but these drew almost no fan mail when we occasionally put them on the air.

Most stations were apologetic about playing recordings during the late twenties and early thirties. They were used sometimes in the afternoon hours when we thought listening audiences were scantiest. It was called "canned music," and every station tried to fill evening hours with live talent, ball games, dance orchestras, etc. Almost every town had its imitation of Chicago's Black Hawk Restaurant and Aragon and Trianon ballrooms. We budding announcers thought we had arrived when we could get up on a band stand and say, "This is the music of the Carl McElfresh Orchestra coming to you from the ballroom of the beautiful Hotel Fairmont."

But the days of live radio were already numbered. It was not long until a turntable was installed which would play a platter the size of a small bicycle wheel containing fifteen minutes of entertainment material. One of the first—known as electrical transcriptions—was a Sunday religious program sponsored by the Church of God. We broadcast this one for years. They paid well and regularly. We were always told that if a new platter were lost or broken in the mail to just repeat an old one. Occasionally a salesman would come offering to sell fifteen-minute platters of various kinds of music. Shad Rowe bought one series called "Down on the Old Plantation." He dearly loved Southern songs and had us play them time after time on the air. Recorded programs certainly made things easier for announcers, but they were not as exciting as having a studio filled with live talent—mostly amateurs, by

today's standards, and of having to adjust to all kinds of situations and ad lib your way out of them. If a hillbilly fiddler broke a string while in the middle of a tune, he simply stopped playing without saying anything. The announcer had to be ready to take over and fill in while the fiddler changed strings in his own good time, tuned up, and got ready to continue playing.

We announcers each had our favorite entertainers and tried to keep them coming back to broadcast more free programs. We asked listeners to write them, gave them plenty of compliments in person and on the air, and sometimes asked them outright to come back and give us another good program. In addition to this unpaid talent, we had at Station WMMN a staff group we called the "Studio Gang." This consisted of Harold McWhorter, who played the piano in the style of the famed Little Jack Little; Lorraine Gaynor, a time salesman, who loved to do blackface minstrel skits; an unemployed trumpet player; a drummer named Pete Cooper; and me. A local group calling themselves Watt's Hawaiian Trio was usually available, and a fellow with a metal guitar who did an imitation of Jimmie Rogers and was known as "Yodelin' Slim."

Sometimes on Saturday afternoons, Shad Rowe would say, "Let's get the gang together and do a D-X program tonight."

We would call up some extra talent we liked, make a deal with an eatery to bring sandwiches and coffee, gather at the studio around 11:30, go on the air at midnight, and carry on until four. Shad Rowe, the station owner, liked to come on first to open the station saying, "This is Station WMMN in Fairmont, West Virginia, owned and operated by the Holt-Rowe Novelty Company, broadcasting with the permission of the Federal Radio Commission." He would rattle this off, sounding like a combination Southern politician and auctioneer. I remember one time we had a studio full of entertainers when he came in from his office with more than the usual rosy flush on his face. He started on his speech but struck a snag when he came to "Federal Radio Commission." The word "Federal" just would not come out. He finally ended with something like "the commish in Washington." He motioned for the musicians to play, called me outside, and said, "Scotty, I've had one too many drinks. You look after things. Best thing I can do is go home."

I still do not know where the term "D-X program" originated, but I believe it was used by stations to designate programs sent over the air at times other than those regularly scheduled. At any rate we did them frequently in Fairmont and had lots of fun with them. After midnight in those days very few stations were still on the air. We had telephone operators on duty taking requests. Callers from distant states received special attention. We always did our best to sing or play the numbers

they wanted and announce their names. With only 500 watts power we boasted of calls from Canada, Missouri, and Alabama. Such calls and letters were good material for time salesman to show advertisers during their sales pitches. And we usually asked listeners, even during late night programs, to send cards and letters answering some kind of sales gimmick, such as Willard's Messenger stomach medicine or Color-Bak hair restorer. The station was paid for each inquiry.

Along about the time our Studio Gang was doing late night broadcasts, which we called D-X programs, we had a number of letters and telephone calls asking if we would come to nearby towns and make personal appearances. They usually came from organizations wanting to raise money for their treasury. Shad Rowe agreed to let us undertake some of these appearances, although it left him to run the station almost single-handed. We decided to call our "road show" group the WMMN Troubadors—a pretty high-toned name for [a] country group. I was studying French in college, reading about the traveling entertainers of the Middle Ages, and suggested the name. We had posters printed, bought some fancy loud shirts and red bandana handkerchiefs, grease paint—which we did not need—and got ready to "knock 'em dead." Gaynor, the time salesman who did blackface, was elated and spent much time brushing up on his old routines and minstrel dialog. We played a good number of school auditoriums, had lots of laughs and lost a good deal of sleep, but scarcely ever came out with more than five or six dollars apiece profit. But it was a good experience, and money went a lot further back then. Gasoline was five gallons for a dollar with full service, sandwiches a dime each.

When the WMMN Troubadors first started making road appearances, there was a part-time announcer named George Gow who went along as master of ceremonies. We chose him because he was a non-stop talker. But he was a sort of itinerant salesman-announcer who never stayed long anywhere. When he left, the group got together and decided they wanted me to be master of ceremonies. As usual, I was a bit shy about taking a job that would keep me out in the spotlight. They told me I would have their help, and I agreed to give it a try. One of my favorite quotations is Mark Twain's remark that his biggest worries never happen. This held true in my case; the show went off without a hitch.

Then one day Gaynor came back from a sales trip to Clarksburg and announced that he had booked the WMMN Troubadors to appear in the big plush Robinson Grand Theatre in that town. We were surprised because this was one of the finest theatres in the state. By that time some theatres occasionally put traveling troupes left over from vaudeville or current radio celebrities on stage between showings of movies. The year previous, my friend Bradley Kincaid had come from

Station WLW in Cincinnati to make an appearance there. I had driven to Clarksburg to sit in the audience and watch his performance. Theatres then were sumptuous palaces of entertainment, not to be compared with the skimpy little movie houses of today. There was a spacious brightly lighted lobby, walls which were decorated with life-size pictures of leading stars of the year. As you stepped inside the theatre proper, a handsome boy or pretty girl in neat usher's uniform approached with flashlight in hand and murmured, "How far down?" You were escorted to a comfortable seat while the organist beside the stage entertained with music from "the mighty Wurlitzer."

We called a special rehearsal of the WMMN Troubadors to plan our show for the Robinson Grand, hired a girl tap dancer as an extra attraction, and got ready to play what we considered a big-time theatre. The night of the show everyone in the group was keyed up with excitement. I had to keep telling myself, "Take it easy. You will soon be a college graduate and have had lots of radio experience. Most of those people in the audience don't have even a high school education. They are the same friendly folks who listen to you on radio every day." After I introduced the first act and heard the applause it got, my confidence returned, and I began to have a feeling of elation which allowed me to crack little jokes and talk with enthusiasm. Our show was well received, and we left the theatre that night with the great feeling performers have after a successful engagement.

It was from an after midnight broadcast that I finally got a firm offer of an audition at Station WLS in Chicago. Bradley Kincaid had left WLS by that time, but was still singing some of the songs I had given him, and still trying to repay me by helping me move on to bigger things. He had arranged an audition for me at WLW, Cincinnati, and I had taken a train there to sing for the man in charge of talent but was not accepted. Later, Bradley wrote George Biggar, WLS program director, in my behalf. We notified Mr. Biggar we were planning a late night program one Saturday in 1932. The WLS Barn Dance, then the most popular country music program anywhere, was on the air every Saturday night until midnight. After he returned home from the broadcast that night, we hoped Mr. Biggar would tune us in at his home in Illinois. At that time every country singer in the nation would have given anything he owned to get on WLS. We were not sure Mr. Biggar was interested in listening, but the gang at WMMN, including station owner Shad Rowe, wanted me to sound good and gave their best support when I sang. Later that week a telegram came asking me to come to Chicago, join WLS talent for a song on the Saturday afternoon "Merry Go Round" program and possibly a number on the Barn Dance.

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North Carolina Folklore Journal

THOMAS McGOWAN, editor
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The *North Carolina Folklore Journal* publishes studies of North Carolina folklore and folklife, analyses of the use of folklore in literature, and articles whose rigorous methodology or innovative approach is pertinent to local folkloristics. Manuscripts should conform to the *MLA Handbook*. Quotations from oral narratives should be transcriptions of spoken texts and should be identified by teller, place, and date.



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North Carolina Folklore Journal

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CONTENTS

1985 Brown-Hudson Awards.....	3
Bertie Mae Dickens, <i>Cece Conway</i>	4
Arthur James Wooten, <i>Cece Conway</i>	7
George Mahon Holt, <i>Daniel W. Patterson</i>	9
Morrison's Cafe: A Study in Community and Social Change in Winston-Salem, <i>Tanja Kim Johnson</i>	11
The Origins of the Hicks Family Traditions, <i>James W. Thompson</i>	18
"The Assailant in Disguise: Old and New Functions of Urban Legends About Women Alone in Danger, <i>Mary Seelhorst</i>	29
The Art of Meditation in Afro-American Folksong: Roy Dunn's Blues, <i>Luke A. Powers</i>	38
Mountain Breed: Western North Carolina Tales, <i>Sandra Elingburg</i>	52
An Interview with Mrs. Bertie Dickens: Old-Time Banjo Player, <i>Karen Linn</i>	61
Books Reviews, <i>John Burrison & Elon Kulii</i>	66

Illustrations, *Norma Farthing Murphy*

North Carolina State Library
Raleigh, N.C.

Cover: Brown-Hudson Folklore Award Winner Bertie Mae Dickens of Ennice, N.C., plays at a music picnic in Galax, Va., fall, 1984. Photo by Cece Conway.

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The Brown-Hudson Award

The Brown-Hudson Award was established in 1970 to honor two distinguished folklorists and members of the North Carolina Folklore Society, the late Frank C. Brown and late Arthur Palmer Hudson. Both had served as the Society's Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Brown from 1913 to 1944 and Dr. Hudson from 1945 to 1966. Dr. Hudson was also the founder and editor until 1966 of *North Carolina Folklore*.

Our state's highest folklore prize, the Award recognizes a resident or native of North Carolina who has contributed in a special way to the appreciation of regional traditions. Past winners of Brown-Hudson Awards are:

- 1971 ***Lucy Calista Morgan***, director of the Penland School of Crafts
 Paul Green, playwright, teacher, and collector of local tales
 George P. Wilson, professor and folklorist
- 1972 ***Artus Monroe Moser***, collector, folk musician, and singer
 Mary Myrtle Cornwell, promoter of folk crafts
 Joseph D. Clark, folklorist and professor
- 1973 ***Bertha Hodges Cook***, maker of traditional knotted bedspreads
 Bernice Kelly Harris, journalist, playwright, and collector of folklore
 Virgil L. Sturgil, performer and collector of mountain music
- 1974 ***W. Amos Abrams***, professor, editor, and collector of folklore
 Edd and Nettie Presnell, dulcimer makers and wood carvers
 Benjamin E. Washburn, writer, historian, and folklore collector
- 1975 ***Richard Walser***, writer, editor, and folklorist
 Cratis D. Williams, teacher, writer, and performer
 "Doc" and Merle Watson, folk singers and musicians
- 1976 ***Ruth Jewell***, teacher and promoter of folk dancing
 F. Roy Johnson, writer and publisher of folklore books
 John Parris, journalist and collector of folklore

- 1977 *Guy Owen*, novelist and poet, teacher, editor and folklorist
Kay Wilkins, teacher and promoter of folk dance
James and Lessie York, performers and collectors of folk music
- 1978 *Grayden and M.C. Paul*, collectors and interpreters of folklife
Leona Trantham Hayes, organizer of folk festivals and promoter of folk dance
Herman and Mabel Estes, folk craftspeople and festival organizers
- 1979 *Dorothy Cole Auman*, folk potter and scholar of regional pottery traditions
Thad Stem, Jr., writer and folklorist
Rogers V. Whitener, writer, teacher, and folklorist
- 1980 *Daniel Watkins Patterson*, teacher, writer, and folklorist
Burlon B. Craig, folk potter
Stanley Hicks, instrument maker, storyteller, folk musician, and dancer
- 1981 *Thomas Jefferson Jarrell*, folk fiddler and teacher
Mary Mintz, Richard Lebovitz, Elizabeth Roberson, and Their Students, teachers, writers and collectors of folklore
- 1982 *Etta Baker and Cora Phillips*, folk musicians
Ovid Williams, writer and teacher
Holger Olof Nygard, writer, teacher, and folklorist
- 1983 *Ora Watson*, quilt maker
Willard Watson, toymaker, storyteller and folk craftsman
Joseph Thomas Wilson, organizer of folk music festivals and promoter of folk music
- 1984 *Lillie Lee*, quilt maker
Jennie Burnett, quilt maker
Emma Dupree, practitioner of folk medicine and herbalist
F. Borden Mace, promoter of folklore study

1985 Brown-Hudson Awards

Bertie Mae Dickens

Bertie Mae Dickens, now 82, is the youngest of the musical Caudill family. Her father Sid, who built and operated a grist mill, played fiddle, and she learned music on the family farm from him and her brothers. Bert's brother Joe, who is the subject of Tom Carter's UNC Master's thesis, played fiddle, and Houston, who is now over 100 years old, played banjo. Houston



Tommy Jarrell and Bertie Dickens play at a music picnic in Galax, Va., fall, 1984. Photo by Cece Conway.

played with the Old Originals and may be heard on Rounder Records, as well as in the field collections of Carter and Blanton Owen. Bert's brothers Cecil and James were musicians also; her only sister Alice played banjo and was an excellent dancer.¹

Bert plays old-time banjo, and like Luther Davis in Galax, Virginia,² knows the oldest tunes in the repertory still heard in the area: "Old Sugar in the Gourd," "Little Black Dog Come Trotting Down the Road," "Cleveland's March," "Waves on the Ocean," "Pineywoods Girl," "Fanny Hill," and "Old Dad." Bert plays usually in the old-time clawhammer method, but on tunes like "Sweet Sunny South," "Curtains at Night," and "Cleveland," she plays in old-style two-finger up-picking with a clawhammer rhythm, or sometimes she mixes both methods in the same tune. She uses an unusual modal tuning in the key of G (gGADE) for "Old Dad," "Cleveland's March," and "Hop Light Ladies." Bert often plays in the key of D (aDADE), but also plays in A, G, and sometimes special tunings (e.g., for "Frankie Baker" and "Reuben").

Bert is a spunky and lively person who lives near Sparta, in Ennice, North Carolina, with her husband Marvin; she still plays out in the community. Last week she played for the Blue Ridge Music Association and was hoping to be here today. But, if she were here, she probably would have told us, as she often tells Alice Gerrard, "I'm getting too old for this—an old gray-headed woman out a-banjo picking."

One final story: A year ago last September Tommy Jarrell and Bert Dickens got together, after seventy years, at Alice Gerrard and Andy Cahan's fall music picnic. They had met and played music only once before when they were about sixteen. When Tommy Jarrell was a boy, he sometimes crossed the mountain to play for a dance. One night a few of the Surry County boys ended up on Brush Creek in Alleghany County with the Caudill clan. Late in the evening a fight broke out, a common event when visiting boys courted the local girls—a dangerous event because so many of the fellows carried guns. People backed off when Tommy pulled out his pistol, but tempers were steaming and Tommy and his pals were well outnumbered. In any case, Bert apparently walked Tommy off to another room and got him playing fiddle tunes. They kept on till dawn. The next day everybody was in a good enough mood that they ate breakfast together and then had another dance before they went home. That 1984 September day of hearing Tommy and Bert crank up those same tunes, as though it had been a month ago instead of seventy years, was a real treat.

We are quite pleased to give the Brown-Hudson Award to Bert Dickens in recognition of her contribution to maintaining the fine old music that she learned from the Caudill family and from her community in Alleghany County.

*Cece Conway
Chapel Hill*

NOTES

1. Thanks to Alice Gerrard and Andy Cahan for detailed information from their fieldwork and for good musical times.
2. Luther Davis died in the fall, 1986.

Arthur James Wooten

Arthur James Wooten, 79, lives with his wife Mollie in Twin Oaks, Alleghany County, North Carolina.¹ Art Wooten was Bill Monroe's first fiddle player. In the 1930's Wooten played music for cattle sales and land sales. During these years of the depression, he also made music on the street, often as a one-man band.

Art Wooten's father died when he was three years old. He lived with different families when he was growing up, and one of them didn't even allow any music around them: "I was about 12 when I bought a fiddle and kept it hid under lumber at the sawmill." In reply to interviewer Ottie Padgett's question about the cost of the fiddle Wooten said, "It couldn't have been much. Maybe 50 cents. I had it rough when I was a child. A kid couldn't earn more than 10 cents a day. He was lucky to find work that paid that well."²

Wooten soon moved across the New River to Grayson County, Virginia, learned the fiddle, and found he could make more money fiddling than working most other jobs available to him. About this time, he came to develop the one-man band with a guitar, a banjo, a fiddle and a harmonica. "I played them all by myself and often all of them at the same time. I probably made more money with my one-man band than I ever did playing with someone else's band. I played wherever I could collect money," Wooten said. He described the difficulties of trying to make money as a musician: "There is not as much money playing for someone else as some may think. The top people are the ones who make the big money. It's hard work. I recall many times going several days and nights without pulling my shoes off."

Art was a prominent and influential participant in the early Galax fiddler's convention. He said, "I believe I won seven fiddling titles in a row in Galax."

In 1937, Wooten took his one-man band to South Carolina: "That was about the time that Charlie and Bill Monroe split. Bill and I got hooked up in Greenville. He was putting together his first band and was looking for a fiddler. I was his first fiddler and was with him six years. I well remember auditioning for the Grand Ole Opry. It was about 1939. We played the 'Muleskinner Blues'." Today you can still get Wooten to play a tape of the "Muleskinner Blues" by the Bluegrass Boys when he was with them.

At 38, during World War II, Wooten was drafted into the Navy. Before he was discharged he served in five war theatres. After the war he kind of quit playing: "I played off and on with Flatt and Scruggs and the Stanley Brothers. I did most of my playing after the war with my family band out of Marion. The army finally broke that band up," he said.



Art Wooten (l) and Tommy Jarrell sit with their fiddles at the premiere of *Sprout Wings and Fly* in the Andy Griffith Playhouse, Mt. Airy, N.C., November, 1984. Photo by Cece Conway.

Wooten is retired and in poor health: he suffers from emphysema, has had three heart attacks and eye surgery. But he still likes to play when he can. When Bill Monroe played in Sparta in the summer of 1984, Monroe and former Bluegrass Boy Clyde Moody had an on-stage reunion with Art. Later that fall, Wooten played at the Mt. Airy premiere of the Tommy Jarrell film *Sprout Wings and Fly*. Jarrell and Wooten performed on stage together just as they did in the film.

Today we are very pleased to give the Brown-Hudson Award to Arthur Wooten, the man who played fiddle in probably the first and certainly one of the most influential bluegrass bands—Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys.

Cece Conway
Chapel Hill

NOTES

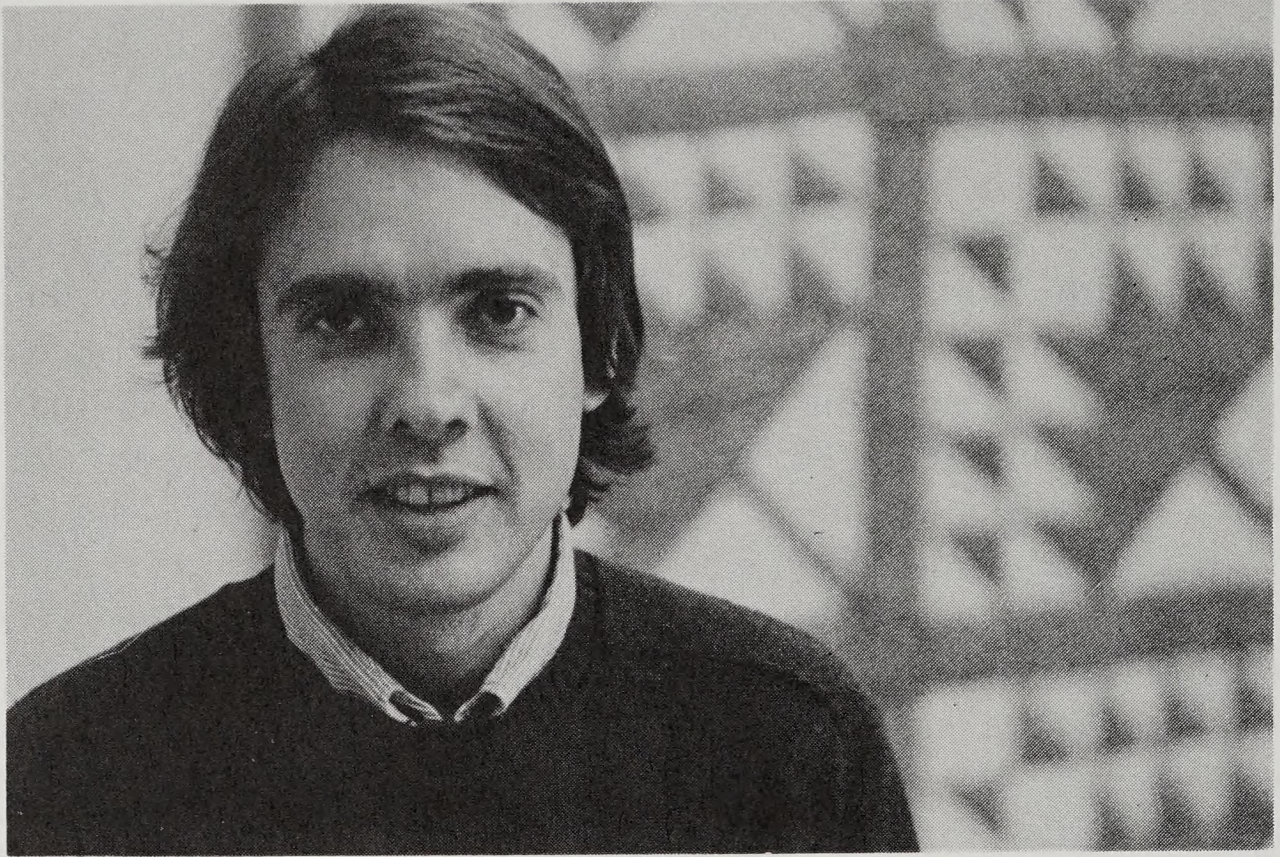
1. Art Wooten died in 1986.
2. Ottie Padgett, "Fiddlin' Art Wooten was Bill Monroe's first fiddle player," *The Gazette*, Galax, Virginia, September 26, 1984. Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are taken from Padgett.

George Mahon Holt

The Brown-Hudson Award bears the names of Frank C. Brown and Arthur Palmer Hudson, two folklorists who between them headed and led the work of the North Carolina Folklore Society from its founding in 1912 until 1964, its first half century. This award in their names recognizes distinguished service to the understanding and fostering of folk traditions in North Carolina. By my rough calculations, the past recipients of this honor averaged, at the time when they received it, 72.394 years of age. The newest recipient—George Mahon Holt—is merely thirty-three years old. In admitting this to the assembled members of the Society, I hasten to assure you that he has upon his shoulders a very wise old head.

One of George Holt's wisest early decisions was to leave his stomping grounds in Texas and Oklahoma and come to North Carolina after college. His wisdom was at that time in his life admittedly not yet perfected. He enrolled in the wrong institution, but since several of us here also made that little slip when we were young, I trust that no one will hold it against him. In any case while still a student at Duke University, George spent the summer of 1973 as an intern at the Smithsonian Institution, working with its Festival of American Folklife. George has said that this was a transforming experience for him. Exposure to the extraordinary performers assembled for this festival aroused his admiration from American traditional cultures and, happily for North Carolina, challenged him to mount a festival of his own at Duke University. He did so with great success in April 1974, followed it with another even more successful festival the following spring, and capped it in 1976 with the North Carolina Bicentennial Festival, the first of what has become a series of annual festivals in Durham at West Point on the Eno.

The informed judgment, enterprise, and managerial skills that George Holt demonstrated in these festivals led to his being hired in 1977 by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. His task: to establish and develop a folklife program for the state. Two thirds of the states now have a state folklorist, but George was one of the very first persons to get such an appointment. His success helped prepare the way for other state folklorists, and his programs have served as models for them. North Carolina itself has greatly benefited from his work. His office has not only organized other festivals but worked to get presentations by folk artists and folklorists into secondary education in state schools, assisted the Museum of History with a major exhibition on Black culture, issued a folk-music recording, collaborated in the production of a documentary film on medicine shows, carried out folklife surveys, served as a folklife resource center for local organizations in the state, and as a granting agency that supports folklore projects being undertaken by others across the state.

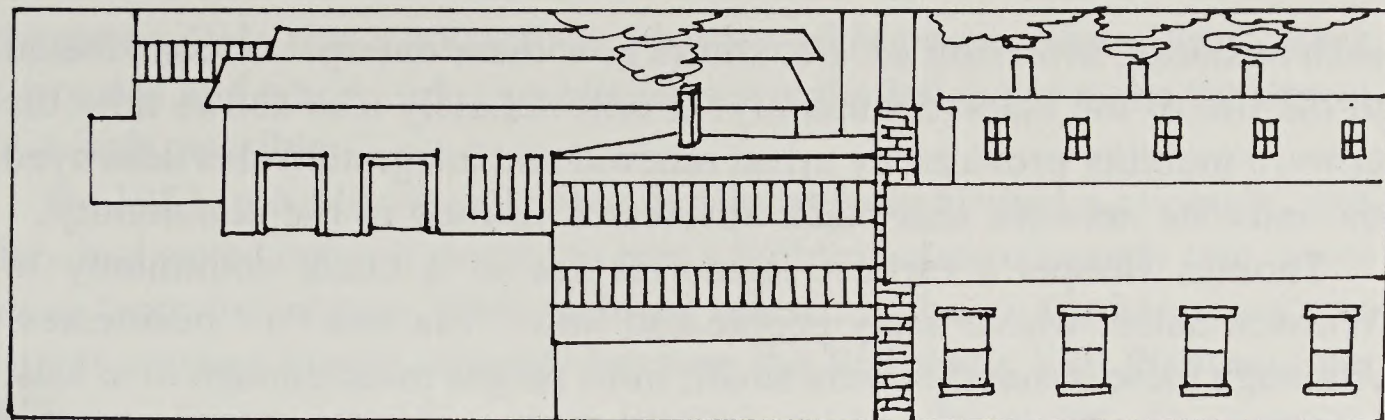


George Holt stands before the commemorative quilt for the North Carolina Bicentennial Folklife Festival, summer, 1976.

All of George Holt's work in the Office of Folklife Programs has been marked by two extraordinary gifts. One is his talent for spotting and building on the special abilities of others. He has drawn into his staff such talented people as Glenn Hinson, Della Coulter, Sharon King, and Mary Ann McDonald, and given them scope for their own creativity. The other talent shining through all his work is George's imagination. He never allows a success to settle into a dull routine. His 1976 Bicentennial Festival offered a cross-section of North Carolina folklife. For his British and American Festival in 1984 he planned a very different kind of event, one that showcased traditional culture within a wide historical context and blended scholarly lectures with brilliant concerts and exhibits. His just-completed Country Music Festival in Charlotte took a third approach, educating a single city about its role in fostering traditional culture during a period in its recent past. Next spring his office will try a fourth approach, sending out a touring festival to present black performers to communities at a distance from the earlier festival sites.

With all these good works, George Holt has long since paid off any debt he owed to the Smithsonian Institution. It is fitting now for the North Carolina Folklore Society to acknowledge this state's indebtedness to George Mahon Holt by offering him the Brown-Hudson Award for his distinguished service to the study, appreciation and encouragement of the traditional arts of North Carolina.

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1985 W. Amos Abrams Prize Co-Winner

Morrison's Cafe: A Study of Community and Social Change in Winston-Salem

by Tanja Kim Johnson

“Upon the hard rock of racial, social, and economic exploitation and injustice,” writes Lawrence Levin, “black Americans forged and nurtured a culture in which they formed and maintained kinship networks, made love, raised and socialized children, built a religion, and created a rich expressive culture in which they articulated their feelings and hopes and dreams.”¹ Unfortunately, the opportunity that promotes the growth of a culture may also promote the abandonment of that same culture when there is a chance for upward social mobility. An example of how upward social mobility disintegrates a culture, on a smaller level a community, is the effect that urban renewal and integration had on the black community of Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Thomas Hooper, a black native of the city of Winston-Salem and a reputable businessman there for approximately sixty years, recalls the city of Winston-Salem in his youth as a small Southern factory town. During the day, blacks and whites worked together in the factories. However, the day's end saw them depart into their own distinct communities. Segregation was the law of the land. One of the constructive adaptations to segregation was to set up their own cafes, corner stores, laundromats, and other businesses. These establishments became an integral part of the black community not only because of the services they performed but even more because of the sense of comradery that they provided. The history of one

such business, Morrison's Cafe, shows how these enterprises contributed to the life of the black community. It unfortunately also shows how the upward mobility provided by urban renewal and integration also destroyed the intricate network that black businesses formed in the community.

Thomas Hooper's earliest memories are of a black community in Winston-Salem where many people had little "Ma and Pa" businesses. Although these businesses were small, most people made enough to at least break even. In fact, he states, many children went to college on the money that these businesses made. The businesses generally catered to working-class people, and the owners of these businesses generally worked in the factories along with attending to their family businesses. The proprietors even often obtained the money to start their businesses by working other jobs and by supplementing their earnings through illegal ventures such as bootlegging and gambling. The community did not look down on these activities. In fact, Thomas Hooper and his wife Johnnye explain, "Liquor was a good seller all up and down Patterson Avenue and you have to remember that people had to eat and there was no way to make enough money to feed six or seven or eight children by going to work in the factory, and they had to figure out some kind of way to have enough money to do what they had to do in order to make ends meet. So, they sold liquor, which really didn't really harm anyone anyway."²

Morrison's Cafe is one business that Thomas and his wife Johnnye Hooper hold especially fond memories of. This cafe was opened by two sisters, Lula Mae Morrison and Susie Morrison Howie, in 1953. The sisters had gained notable reputations as good cooks. Their home was conveniently located in a warehouse district, and many of the factory workers would stop by the residence of the Morrison sisters in order to buy homecooked dinners from them. Other regular visitors were tenants of a nearby rooming house where people simply rented rooms and did not have cooking facilities. Lula Morrison worked regularly as a county nurse. Susan Morrison Howie was married to Ulysses Howie, who worked in one of the nearby factories. These three people believed that they could make an eating establishment earn additional money for them in the factory town of Winston-Salem. They worked hard, and each person did what he or she could to save enough money to officially open a restaurant. Lula Morrison donated part of her salary as a registered nurse to the venture. Susie Howie had also worked in one of the nearby factories. Poor health forced her into retirement; nevertheless, she contributed to the savings by "playing the numbers." Ulysses Howie did most to help finance the dream, because he was able to donate a portion of his earnings as a factory worker to the business as well as donate the earnings that he made as a bootlegger and a moneylender. Lula Morrison vehemently defends Ulysses Howie's

character: "He was a good man, a hard-working man, who went to work every day and whose side line businesses really helped to make the dream of a cafe possible."

By 1953, the Morrison/Howie family had established a clientele, and they had saved enough money to rent a building approximately two doors away from their home. This building offered a chance for Morrison's to attract an even bigger clientele because the Reynold's Foil Plant and the Winston Steam Laundry were located across the street. In essence, Morrison's Cafe became a pioneering fast-food restaurant. The factory employees worked odd shifts and many simply did not have time to fix breakfast in the morning or to go home for dinner. They took their breakfast, lunch or dinner breaks at Morrison's Cafe. However, the cafe was unlike fast food restaurants in that the meals that Morrison's served were the same dishes that the customers would have eaten at home. Lula Morrison and her sister Clara smiled and nodded vigorously as they recalled the menu at Morrison's which included homemade rolls, Southern fried chicken, hamburger, pork chops, pinto beans, turnips, fried corn, white potatoes, rice, butter beans, and string beans. The menu also included a wide array of desserts, such as strawberry pie, peach pie, sweet potato pie, egg custard, and potato custard.

The cafe was geared to the needs and tastes of the people. Generally the people at the factories worked shifts from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., or from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Miss Morrison or some other family member therefore opened at 6 a.m. so that the second shift could eat breakfast and did not close the cafe until midnight. Breakfast was generally served from 6 a.m. to 12 noon. Miss Morrison would open the cafe, then report to her job as a county nurse at 8 a.m. She would come back to the cafe at noon to help with the lunch shift. She remembers that the vegetables would always be cooked beforehand and frozen. Then they would simply reheat the vegetables during the day. However, customers could come in during the breakfast hour or lunch hour and get a quick egg fried on the grill. She also remembers that the restaurant generally fried a few fish and hamburgers during the lunch hour and kept them hot because these were favorites of the customers. She proudly boasts that "We never served leftover food at the cafe." She remembers that vegetables like pinto beans and rice, in fact, were cooked fresh every day. She says, "We cooked what people liked to eat. We cooked Southern cooking, and that cooking that you find in these modern places is just dumped out of the can. And that seasoning that they use? It ain't nothin'." In short, Morrison's Cafe was a place where people could get a good home-cooked meal for a dollar at whatever time they wanted it.

Providing meals was the primary service that Morrison's offered to the community, but the restaurant also served other functions. Miss Morrison stated that her brother, Albert Morrison, had a counter in the cafe where he sold candy, chewing gum, cigarettes, Vaseline, and even pocket handkerchiefs. She stated emphatically that "You could get anything you wanted."⁸ A closer examination of Morrison's shows, however, that it did considerably more than feed and supply small articles to the community. In fact, Morrison's played an integral part of the general network of the community.

Morrison's was the factory man's restaurant. In a sense, Morrison's served as one big break room for the factories. It became an unofficial communication center because the choice news from each of the factories as well as from the general community was discussed there. Lula Morrison states proudly, "It was something." She remembers that everyone from "old ugly Delsie to old bragging Mr. Ed" came to the cafe. She and her sister Clara laugh heartily as they recall that Delsie was a prostitute. They remember that Delsie would come and buy cigarettes and Vaseline. Then at 10 p.m. Delsie would wink and say that it was "time for her shift." Miss Morrison's face formed a slight smirk as she recalled "old bragging Mr. Ed":

Mr. Ed lived above the cafe in a rooming house. The woman that he lived with left him and he could keep the house clean, but he didn't know how to cook. He would come into the cafe to get his meals and he had worked in Reynolds for a long time and had made good. When he came to the cafe he would show off in front of the other workers. He would open his pocketbook and let a ten-dollar bill drop on the floor. Then someone would usually say, "Hey, you dropped some money." Then Mr. Ed would turn back and say, "Oh, that ain't nothing." Then he would pick it up.

Miss Morrison ends her story of Mr. Ed with a didactic conclusion: "Finally someone broke into his house and robbed him of every dime that he had because he carried it in his pocket, and it wasn't long after the robbery that he died."

One reason Miss Morrison, along with the other customers of Morrison's found Mr. Ed's behavior intolerable is that people generally did not make much money in the factory. Miss Morrison remembers that the factory workers would often need to borrow money from another customer, Mr. B. Dunlap, who was a money lender. He charged twenty-five cents on the dollar, and people would come to Morrison's to pay Mr. Dunlap back. In essence, Mr. Dunlap set up a business within a business; Morrison's was his office. Miss Morrison also maintains that "it is hard to say" whether Morrison's made a profit, "because a lot of people did not have the money to pay for the meals that they ordered." She explains

that "the railroad was also near the cafe and a lot of hobos used to come in and tell you that they were hungry but did not have the money to pay for a meal." Miss Morrison also remembers that seasonal tobacco workers would not have any money to pay for their food and that they did odd jobs for her in order to pay for their meals in an off season.

Thus another function that Morrison's provided was the generation of jobs for unemployed blacks. Miss Morrison had a chainsaw, and she owned some land up in Baux Mountain. She remembers that when she needed wood she would get some of the seasonal tobacco workers to ride up to her property to help her get the wood. She says that many workers paid their bills sometimes by helping her to chop wood.

This was one expression of a larger pattern in one black community, the closeness that people felt during the era of the "Ma and Pa" businesses as a result of everyone's dependence upon others. Blacks patronized one another, and this patronage helped blacks to generate jobs for each other. Thomas Hooper explains this point by saying, "Most people used wood and coal, and they had no place to store this coal. Therefore, on weekends and after school, you could see twenty-five boys or more with wagons hauling wood or coal for twenty-five cents." He says that many grown men made their living hauling wood or coal for people. Mr. Hooper's reference to the little boys who earned money after school caused Miss Morrison to remember a little boy named Glendale Reed who used to haul and run errands for her sister Susie. Miss Morrison laughs and says that Glendale "was a fat, whining little boy who really had a crush on my little niece Sharen." She says that Susie "used to give him money and send him to the store to get different things and that he would take Sharen along with him. If there was any change left, he would take Susie's money and buy Sharen candy or cookies or anything she wanted." Miss Morrison continues, "When Susie would ask Glendale for her change, he would whine, 'Miss Susie, Shaaren wanted it and I bought Shaaren something with that change.'" Miss Morrison summarized the point of all these stories by stating:

My God, there were plenty of black-owned businesses, and we survived because black folks patronized us because they couldn't go the white folks' places. We talked with the people, talked with anybody, we were friendly with them. A lot of times people will come up to me now and I don't know them, and they will say, "I used to come to the cafe to eat all the time and you used to serve." You can ask Staplefoote (an old friend) or anybody who knows us and they will tell you that our house was the "house by the side of the road." Anybody could come and get a meal. Nobody ever bothered us. We were never robbed or anything like that. We were a community. Your generation is not like that. I don't know, but looks like people are far away from each other. Neighbors are far away from each other. There was a time when anybody was sick, you would always go to see if there was anything that you could do to help. People were much closer then and I miss that. I miss that a lot.

Miss Morrison says that in spite of her love for people she and her family were forced to close the business in 1961. The death of Susie Howie had left her to run the cafe by herself, and by 1961 there was "so much federal stuff and making out reports, and I didn't have time to do all that federal stuff and work on my job too." Miss Morrison figures it would not have been as profitable to stay in business because "most of the factories have moved away and people were buying from white businesses anyway." In short, there were changes within the community and the society which triggered the closing of Morrison's Cafe as well as other "Ma and Pa" businesses.

Two other changes explain why a significantly smaller number of black-owned businesses exists in Winston-Salem today. These two social changes are integration and urban renewal. According to George Hill, a prominent black businessman who owns Winston-Mutual Insurance Company, segregation had both helped and hurt black business. He explains that segregation forced blacks to shop from each other. However, he thinks that segregation also instilled the idea that white businesses were superior. White businesses seemed like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow because blacks were deprived of the right to shop at many white businesses. Integration changed all this. Because there was no longer a societal restraint which welded the black community together, blacks no longer needed or desired the services of their black businesses and they abandoned the small "Ma and Pa" stores for the bigger white-owned businesses.

Another social program also conspired in the disintegration of the black community in Winston-Salem. This program was urban renewal. Some folks, like William Henry Andrews, a major black proponent of urban renewal, see it as having built up the black community. Andrews states that

Years ago people lived in places like Johnson Street, Blues Street, 11th Street Bottom, and my neighborhood, 4th Street. Many people lived in homes where there was no central heating and many times not even a bathtub. As a result of urban renewal, these same people have come to expect these amenities. Those run-down neighborhoods that I grew up in and used to see no longer exist. Urban renewal provided decent, safer and more sanitary housing. Urban renewal served to uplift the economic and social idea and ideals of the community. The businesses that urban renewal relocated thrived, and the little marginal business would have gone out of business anyway because of the social changes that were taking place in America like integration.⁴

Thomas Hopper, however, paints a less positive picture of urban renewal. He thinks it did both good and harm. He says:

Instead of renewal, they removed a lot of the businesses and did not allow them to rebuild in the same community. Urban renewal tore out the heart of East Winston when it tore out the black businesses, and it has never recovered, and I don't think

that it ever will be the same. Sure there were small businesses, but these Ma and Pa businesses allowed people to eat, sleep, and pay the bills. I have fought this ever since urban renewal started. I registered my protests with the urban renewal, and every time I get a chance I remind them that they did us a lot of injustice.

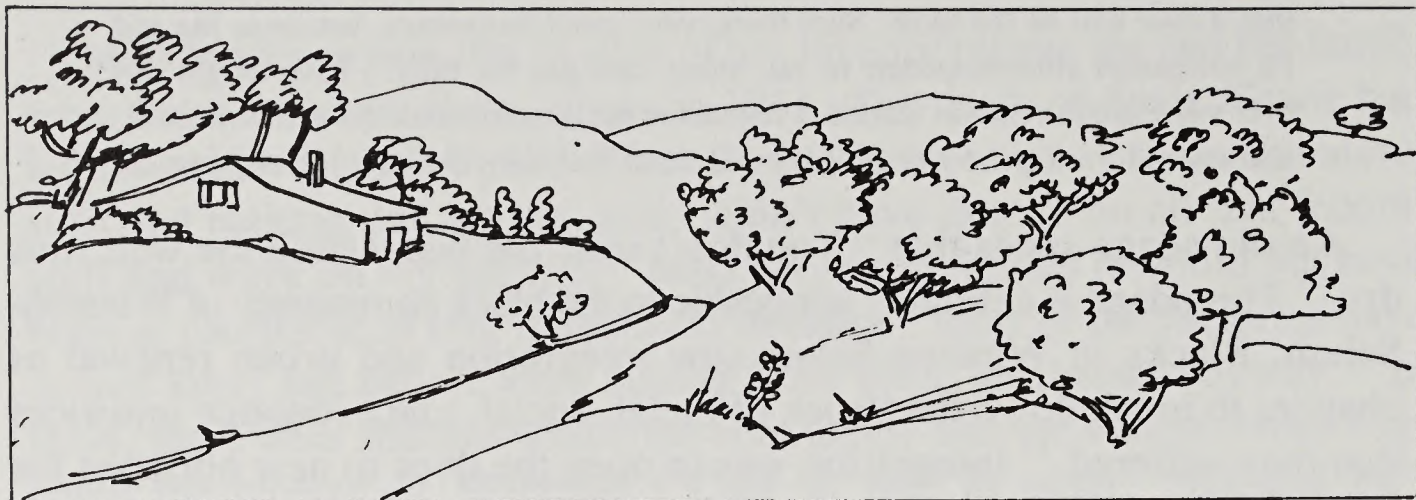
An old adage states that "You don't miss the water until the well runs dry." This adage is definitely applicable to the black community of Winston-Salem. Blacks in Winston-Salem saw integration and urban renewal as chances to break down the "rock of racial, social, and economic injustices that they suffered." Integration was to open the door to new horizons for blacks, and urban renewal would mark "the beginning of the end of slums in Winston-Salem." In short, blacks had two instruments which enabled them to move up the social ladder. Unfortunately, it is impossible to climb a ladder and carry all of one's belongings. One has to leave something behind. The things that blacks in Winston-Salem left behind were their small "Ma and Pa" businesses and the sense of community that these businesses provided. Mr. Joseph Bradshaw, a retired history teacher and a native of Winston-Salem, defines the situation eloquently:

Before urban renewal, the black community was tightly knit. Most of the businesses, cafes, and even the churches were located downtown or near downtown. Urban renewal uprooted these businesses and spread them all over the city. Then the Safe Bus Company, which was a black-owned company, went out of business. People weren't going to drive all the way back to the other side of town to go to another business. The loss of the bus company made matters worse. I used to go downtown just to talk to different people who lived in the community but who I didn't get to see often. Now there isn't anybody downtown but the winos. I appreciate the advances that integration and urban renewal have provided, but I hate the loss of community and, young lady, you can quote me on that.⁵

NOTES

1. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. xi.
2. Interview with Thomas and Johnnye Hooper, 2 March 1985, Winston-Salem, N.C.
3. Interview with Lula Mae Morrison, 3 March 1985, Winston-Salem, N.C.
4. Interview with Mr. William Andrews, 8 April 1985, Winston-Salem, N.C.
5. Interview with Mr. Joseph Bradstreet, 5 April 1985, Winston-Salem, N.C.

North Carolina State Library
Raleigh, N.C.



The Origins of the Hicks Family Traditions

by James W. Thompson

The study of traditional music and stories in Appalachia is essentially the study of families. The folklore found within a nuclear or extended family tends to be transmitted from parents and grandparents to children. By using the science of genealogy, the researcher may trace traditions back through a family tree and, to a greater or lesser extent, determine their origins.

The descendants of David Hicks, Sr., who died in Ashe County, North Carolina, in late 1792 or early 1793, have inherited and perpetuated a body of lore of special importance in American folklife. The Jack Tales are a part of their heritage, as are a collection of songs that include thirty-eight Child ballads and numerous other pieces of instrumental and vocal music. In addition, though they are beyond the scope of this essay, there are extensive traditions of herbal medicine, natural lore, and oral history that have been little recorded by collectors. Among certain groups in the family there are craft traditions, centered on instrument making, that date back to the years immediately following the Civil War.

During the course of this study, I have identified four groups of descendants of David Hicks, Sr., whose geographic separation enables us to trace the origins of their traditions by comparing likenesses and differences between them. The names I have applied to these families are based on their location when they were first discovered by folklorists.

- I. **The Beech Mountain Group:** from Beech Mountain, in Watauga and Avery counties, North Carolina.
- II. **The Mast Gap Group:** located between Valle Crucis and Cove Creek, Watauga County, North Carolina.
- III. **The Hot Springs Group:** from the small community in Madison County, North Carolina.
- IV. **The Cade's Cove Group:** now situated within the boundaries of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee.

The genealogical relationships within each group and their connections to each other are given in Tables 1-4.¹

To demonstrate the cultural links between these parts of the extended Hicks family, I have compared the lists of Child ballads known to each group of singers; the results are given in Table 5. As can be seen, twenty-seven of the thirty-eight reported ballads are known by at least two groups; thirteen are found in three or four groups. Similar charts could be prepared on tales and later songs as well.

A striking example of these links can be shown by comparing two versions of an unusual variant of Child 18 ("Sir Lionel"). The version on the left was collected in 1939 from Samuel Harmon, whose family left the Valle Crucis area before 1880, settling first in the Grandfather Community (near Linville) and then Cade's Cove shortly after 1880. Rena Hicks, who provided the other version during the 1960's, lived in Rominger on Beech Mountain all her life.

Samuel Harmon, Group IV

"The Wild Boar"²

Abram Bailey had three sons,
 Blow your horn, Center,
 And he is through the wildwood gone
 Just like a jovial hunter.

As he marched down the greenwood side
 Blow your horn, Center,
 A pretty girl O there he spied
 As he was a jovial hunter.

There is a wild boar in all these woods,
 Blow your horn, Center,
 He slew the lord and his forty men
 As he was a jovial hunter.

Rena Hicks, Group I

"Jobal Hunter"³

Abe and Bailey had three sons;
 The youngest was called Center.
 He's gone to the Green's woods hunting
 Just like a jobal hunter.

As he walked up the Green Brier Ridge,
 Blow your horn, Center,
 There he met a Gaily-Dee,
 Just like a jobal hunter.

She says, "There is a wild boar in these
 woods,
 Blow your horn, Center,
 For he has killed my lord and forty men,
 As you are a jobal hunter."

How can I this wild boar see?
Blow your horn, Center,
Wind up your horn and he'll come to you
As you are a jovial hunter.

He wound his horn unto his mouth
Blow your horn, Center,
He blew east, north, west and south,
As he was a jovial hunter.

The wild boar heard him unto his den,

Blow your horn, Center,
He made the oak and ash then for to bend,
As he was a jovial hunter.

They fit three hours by the day,
Blow your horn, Center,
And at length he this wild boar slay,
As he was a jovial hunter.

As he marched by the wild boar's den,
Blow your horn, Center,
He saw the bones of 500 men,
As he was a jovial hunter.

He meets the old witch wife on the bridge,
Blow your horn, Center,
Begone, you rogue, you've killed my pig
As you are a jovial hunter

There is three things I crave of thee,
Blow your horn, Center,

Your hawk, your hound, your gay lady,
As you are a jovial hunter.

These three things you'll not have of me,
Blow your horn, Center,

Neither hawk, nor hound, nor gay lady,
As you are a jovial hunter.

He split the old witch wife to the chin,
Blow your horn, Center,
And on his way he went again,
Just like a jovial hunter.

He says, "O, how am I to know?
Blow your horn, Center,
Blow your horn north, east, west and south,
As you are the jobal hunter."

He blowed his horn north, east, west and
south,
Blow your horn, Center,
The wild boar heard him unto his den,
Just like a jobal hunter.

And as they crossed the White Oak
Mountain,
Blow your horn, Center,
On their way they went again,
Just like a jobal hunter.

As he slayed the wild boar,
Blow your horn, Center,
The oak and ash they did bend,
As he was a jobal hunter.

As they passed the wild boar's den,
Blow your horn, Center,
There lay the bones of 10,000 men,
As he was a jobal hunter.

They met the old witch wife on a bridge,
Blow your horn, Center,
"Begone, you rogue, you've killed my pig
As you are the jobal hunter."

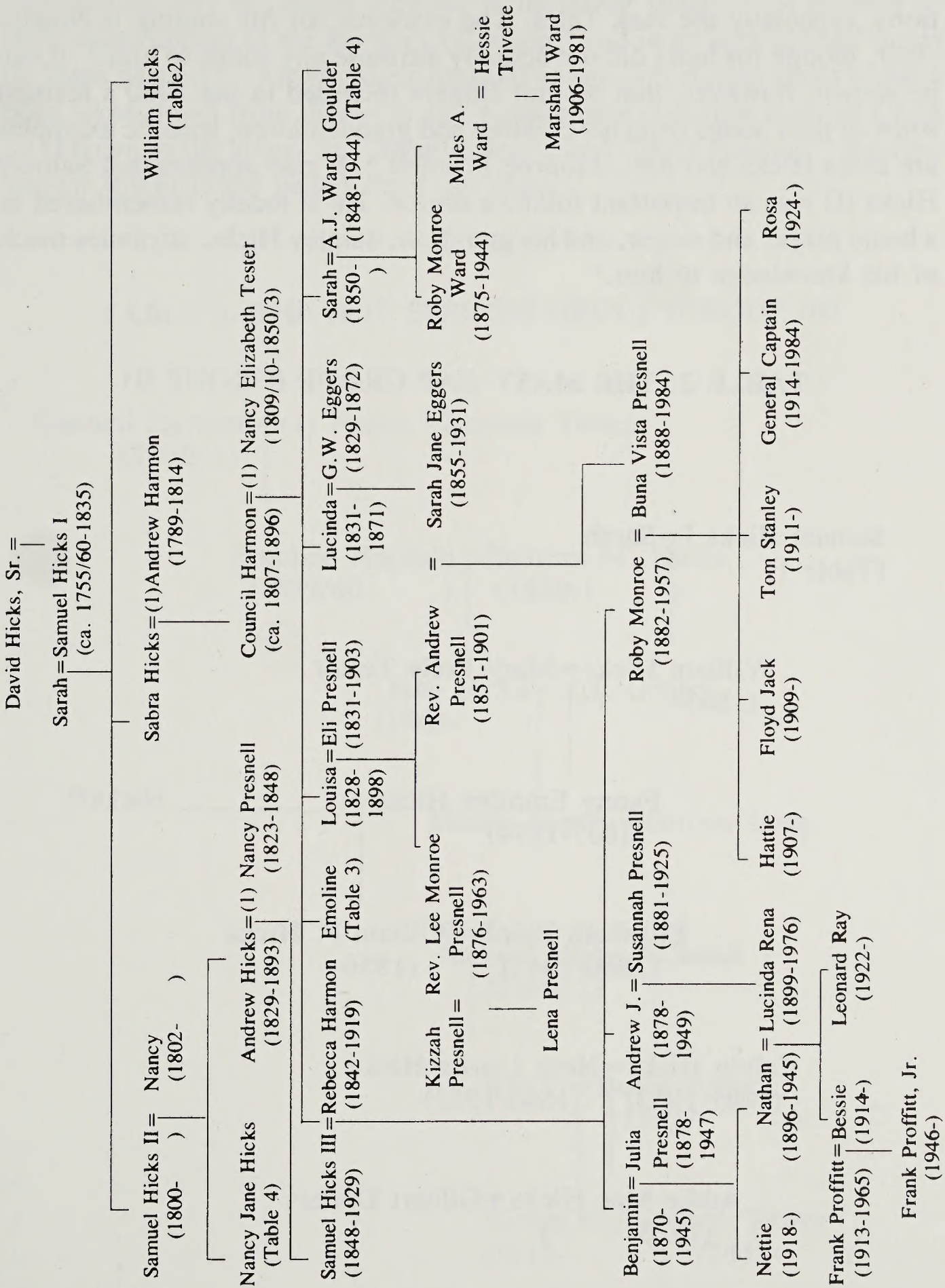
She says, "These three things I crave of
yourn,
Blow your horn, Center,
'S your 'hawk, your hound and your
Gaily-Dee,
As you are the jobal hunter."

He says, "These three things you can't
have of mine,
Blow your horn, Center,
Is my 'hawk, my hound and my Gaily-
Dee,"
Just like a jobal hunter.

He split the witch wife through the chin,
Blow your horn, Center,
And on their way they went again,
As you are the jobal hunter.

Other similar comparisons could, of course, be made. We will now examine each group in detail, seeking as we do so the origins of their traditions.

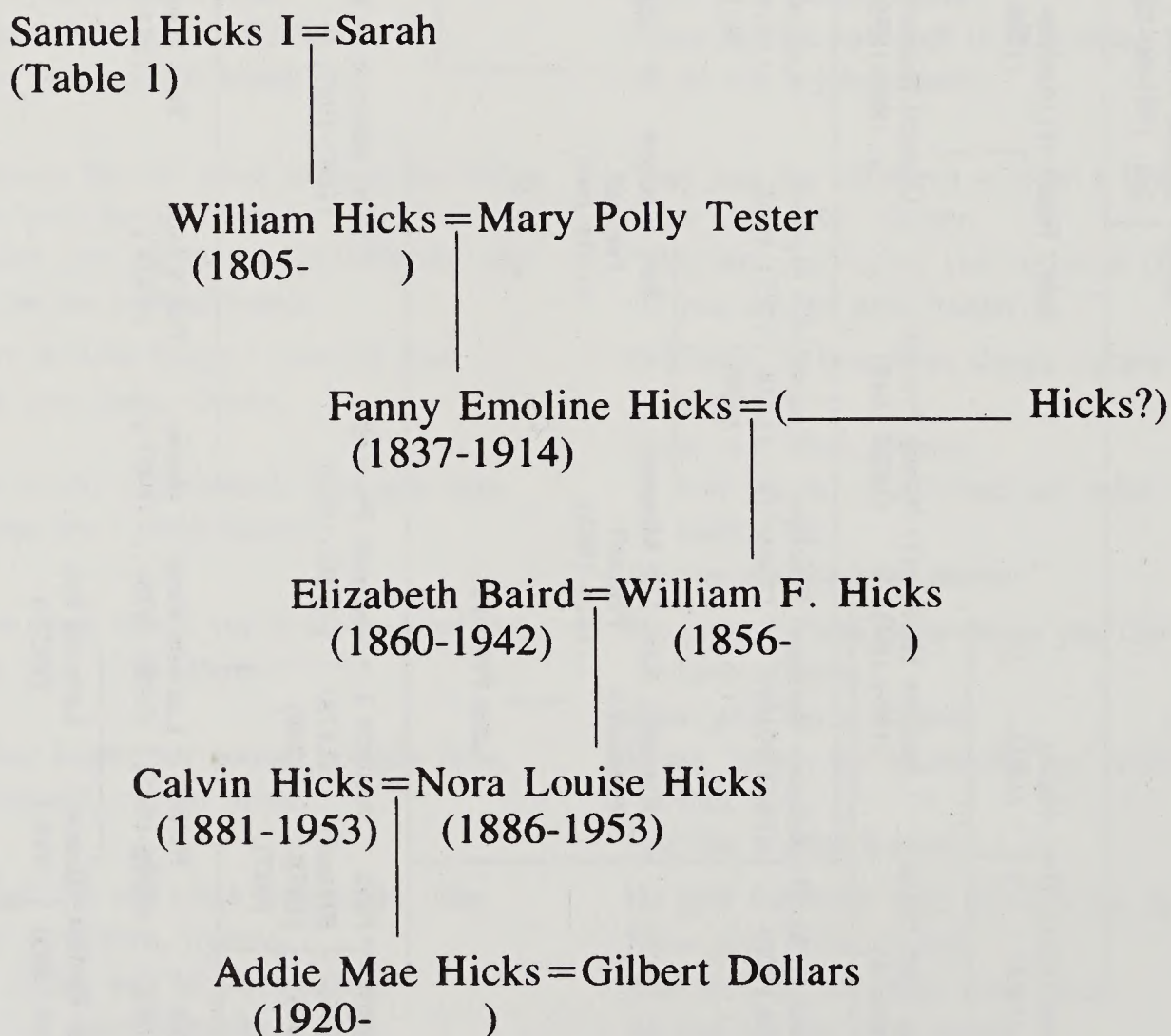
TABLE 1: THE BEECH MOUNTAIN GROUP (GROUP I)



Group I

As can be seen in Table 1, the Beech Mountain Group of singers and storytellers are descended from Council Harmon (ca. 1807-ca. 1896). It has been known for nearly fifty years that he was the source of these traditions, especially the Jack Tales. The evidence for his singing is equally clear, though his heirs did not actually attribute any songs to him.⁵ It can be shown, however, that several singers recorded in the 1960's learned some of their songs from his children and grandchildren; specific examples are Buna Hicks and Rev. Monroe Presnell.⁶ It also appears that Samuel Hicks III was an important folklore source. He is locally remembered as a banjo player and singer, and his grandson, Stanley Hicks, attributes much of his knowledge to him.⁷

TABLE 2: THE MAST GAP GROUP (GROUP II)



Group II

The Mast Gap Hicks are descended from Fanny Hicks, who was evidently the source of the family's songs.⁸ They were first discovered by Miss Edith Walker of Boone in the late 1930's, and Mrs. Nora Hicks was recorded by Dr. W. Amos Abrams in the early 1940's.⁹ A number of their songs appear in the Brown Collection¹⁰ and in an unpublished thesis by Edna Miller¹¹. Among their unusual songs—no stories seem to have been taken down from them—is an exceptionally complete copy of Child 53 (known to the singer as "Susan Price") and "Bold Robing," the first known Robin Hood ballad from our state.

TABLE 3: THE HOT SPRINGS GROUP (GROUP III)

Council Harmon=(1) Nancy Elizabeth Tester
(Table 1)

Emoline Harmon=Ransom M. Hicks
(1839/40) (1840/1-)

Jane Hicks=N.J. Gentry
(1863-)

Maude Gentry=Grover Long

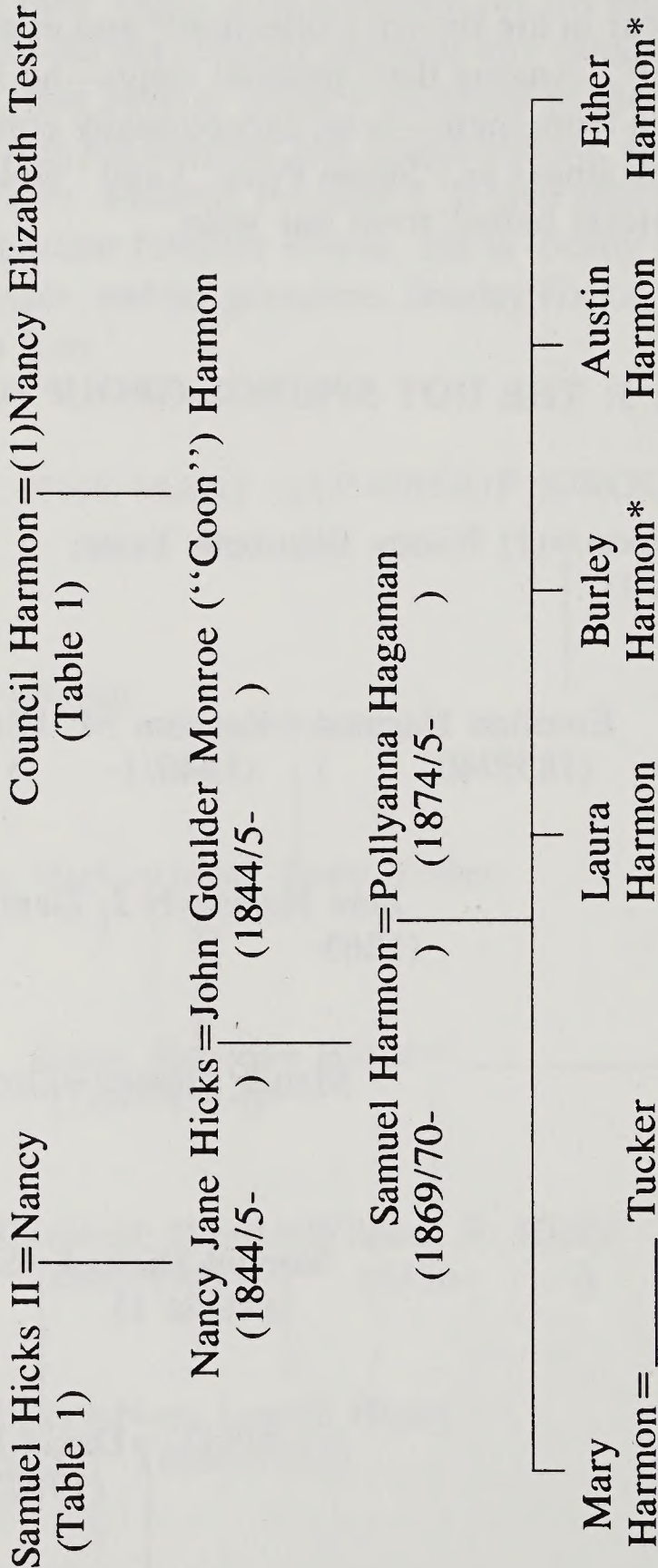
Samuel Hicks I=Sarah
(Table 1)

NN(1)=David Hicks
(1782?-)

Hiram Hicks=Jane Tester
(1813-) (1815-)

Ransom M. Hicks
(above)

TABLE 4: THE CADE'S COVE GROUP (GROUP IV)



*One of these girls was the wife of Hiram Proctor

Note that Samuel Harmon and Pollyanna Haganan were step-brother and sister. Upon the death of Nancy Hicks Harmon, Monroe Harmon married the widowed mother of Polly Haganan.

Group III

The Gentrys of Hot Springs were the first members of the extended Hicks family to be discovered by folklorists. Mrs. Jane Hicks Gentry was a major source for Cecil Sharp and Olive Dame Campbell in 1916¹² and also provided the first texts of Jack Tales in 1923.¹³ Her daughter, Maud Gentry Long, recorded songs and tales for the Library of Congress in 1947.¹⁴ As can be seen in the Table, Jane Gentry was a granddaughter of Council Harmon. She stated in 1923 that she had learned her Jack Tales from him. In her 1947 recordings, Maud Long indicated that *both* her parents told the tales, though it is clear that her mother was the more regular teller.

Group IV

The Harmon family of Cade's Cove was discovered by Mr. and Mrs. Mellinger Henry in 1928. Their extensive song collection was taken down, often with the music, and included in Henry's *Folk-Songs of the Southern Highlands*. With the creation of the national park in 1930, they removed to Varnell, Georgia. In 1939, Samuel Harmon was living in Maryville, Tennessee, where Herbert Halbert of the Library of Congress recorded several songs and stories from him.

The Harmons are the most important of the four groups because they provide a documented link to the eighteenth century. Samuel and his wife Pollyanna were step-brother and sister; Samuel's father married Pollyanna's mother as his second wife. They were both raised in a household with Samuel Hicks II, who was Samuel Harmon's maternal grandfather. Both Harmons specifically told the Henrys that it was Grandfather Hicks who taught them the songs they knew.¹⁸ At least one of these songs is stated to have come from Samuel Hicks II's father.¹⁹

Let us summarize our findings so far. Groups I and III derive their traditions to a great extent from Council Harmon. Group II can be traced no further than Fanny Hicks, but it is known that she was a first cousin, once removed, of Council Harmon. Group IV derived their songs from Samuel Hicks II, Fanny's uncle and Council's first cousin.

Where did Council Harmon learn his stories? In 1938, Roby Monroe Ward told Richard Chase that Council (Roby's grandfather) had said he had learned them from *his* grandfather.²⁰ This has led local genealogists to wonder whether he meant his paternal grandfather, Matthias Cutliff Harmon, or his maternal grandfather, Samuel Hicks, Sr. In 1923, Jane Gentry stated that Council Harmon told her that he had learned the tales from his mother,²¹ which strongly suggests that he was referring to his maternal grandfather. Moreover, the British influences in both the songs and stories are so obvious that one would scarcely expect to find them coming from the German Harmons.²²

Table 5

Child #	Title	Groups:	I	II	III	IV
3	The False Knight on the Road				X	
4	Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight			X		X
7	Earl Brand		X		X	X
10	Two Sisters		X		X	X
13	Edward		X	X	X	
18	Sir Lionel		X			X
20	The Cruel Mother					X
43	The Broomfield Hill					X
53	Young Beichan		X	X	X	X
54	The Cherry Tree Carol				X	
62	Fair Annie				X	
68	Young Hunting				X	X
73	Lord Thomas		X			X
74	Fair Margaret and Sweet William			X		
75	Lord Lovel			X		
76	The Lass of Roch Royal		X			X
79	The Wife of Usher's Well			X	X	X
81	Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard		X	X	X	X
84	Barbara Allan		X		X	X
85	Lady Alice		X	X		X
93	Lamkin		X	X		X
95	The Maid Freed From the Gallows		X			
99	Johnie Scot				X	X
140	Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires			X		
155	Sir Hugh					X
164	King Henry V's Conquest of France					X
200	The Gypsy Laddie		X	X	X	X
209	Geordie				X	
243	The Daemon Lover (House Carpenter)		X	X	X	X
248	The Grey Cock		X		X	
274	Our Goodman		X		X	X
277	The Wife Wrapt in a Wether's Skin					X
278	The Farmer's Curst Wife		X			X
283	The Crafty Farmer					X
286	The Sweet Trinity		X	X	X	X
289	The Mermaid		X			X
295	The Brown Girl			X		X
Uncertain	Little John			X		

The evidence, therefore, appears conclusive that Samuel Hicks I was the source of the Hicks family traditions of storytelling; there is also evidence that he was the source of the songs.²³ He and his wife Sarah are, in addition, the only common link between the four groups we have outlined.

Samuel Hicks I is a shadowy figure in history. John Preston Arthur²⁴ and other local historians²⁵ describe him as a Tory who fled the lowlands to escape persecution during the Revolution. He is supposed to have built a fort on the Watauga River²⁶ and to have traded his land to Benjamin Ward, Sr., for "a rifle, a dog and a sheepskin."²⁷ Chronology, however, strongly suggests that this Samuel was actually Samuel I's father David. It was he who was the patriarch of the family during the Revolutionary War (since he died in 1792 or 1793), and it was he who owned the land usually described as having been his son's property. A possible explanation for this confusion is offered by Stanley Hicks, who states that his first ancestor in the United States was "David Samuel Hicks," who came from "London, England, in 1770."²⁸ Since Stanley clearly refers to the man known in written history as David Hicks, Sr., it is likely that he bore both names.

The first years of the family in America are also obscure. One writer has stated that they first settled in South Carolina, but I find no proof of this.²⁹ There is no clue as to the identity of the wife of David Hicks, Sr. to be found in the New World. Her second son, Samuel, is said to have been four years old at the time of the emigration.³⁰ It appears probable that Samuel I learned his songs and stories from his father, but until the identity and death date of his mother is established, this cannot be said to be proven.

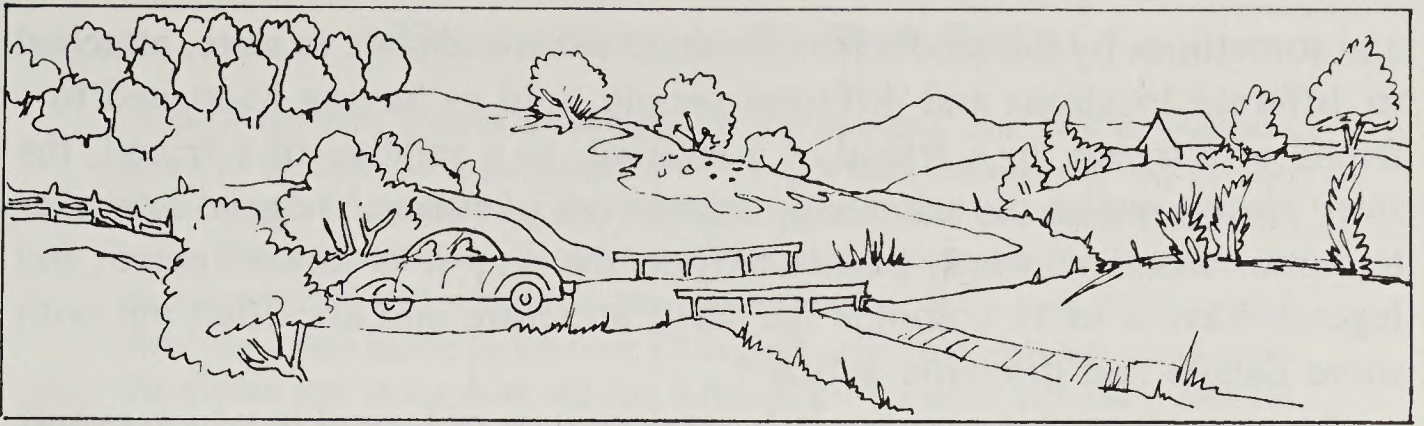
The Atlantic Ocean now stands as the barrier to our further search for the origins of the Hicks family traditions; to date, no genealogist has been able to provide a European origin and lineage for the family. It is possible that they were from Somersetshire, surely an important center for traditional ballads.³¹

The Hicks family is but one of many such traditional groups that exist and have existed in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Further study of the genealogies of mountain singers and storytellers will, I believe, reveal much new and interesting data for scholars.

NOTES

1. The genealogies are developed from census and vital statistics records of Watauga County and from Terry Lynn Harmon, *The Harmon Family* (Boone, N.C.: Minor's Printing, 1984), passim; Sanna Gaffney, ed., *The Heritage of Watauga County, North Carolina*, I (Winston-Salem: Hunter, 1984), pp. 244-45 and 247-48; Mellinger Edward Henry, *Folk-songs of the Southern Highlands* (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1938), pp. 20-23.

2. Bertrand H. Bronson, ed., *Child Ballads Traditional to the United States I* (Library of Congress: AAFS L57), side A, band 3.
3. Thomas G. Burton, *Some Ballad Folks* (Boone, N.C.: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1981), pp. 23, 62.
4. Richard Chase, *The Jack Tales* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943), pp. viii-x, 2.
5. Chase, p. ix.
6. Thomas G. Burton and Ambrose N. Manning, eds., *Folksongs II* (Johnson City, Tenn.: Research and Advisory Council of East Tennessee State University, 1969), pp. 41-63; Anne Warner, *Traditional American Folksongs from the Anne and Frank Warner Collection* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1984), p. 238.
7. Interview, 3 May 1985.
8. Edna Louise Miller, "A Study of Folklore in Watauga County, North Carolina," unpublished thesis, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tenn., June 1938, p. 24.
9. Dr. W. Amos Abrams ballad collection, Appalachian Collection, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. Songs from Nora Hicks are found at tape I, 1, 1007-1056, 2, 000-044; tape II, 2, 300-310, 1110-1184; tape III, 2, 000-020; tape IV, 1, 1268-1315; tape V, 2, 31-51.
10. Jan Philip Schinan, *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore Volume 4: The Music of the Folk Ballads* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1957), song numbers 2D(1), 14E, 19A(1), 20A, 21J, 25J, 26G, 28E(2), 33, 37A, 40A, 47A, 76C, 86A, 97, 104A, 128(1), 209C(1), 331.
11. Miller, pp. 17-18, 24-26, 60-61.
12. Cecil J. Sharp and Maud Karpeles, *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), I, pp. 4, 9, 26-27, 95-96, 101-102, 119, 153-154, 162-164, 201-202, 215-216, 241, 259-260, 267-268, 328, 350-351, 365-366, 385; II, 22, 27-28, 38, 67, 71, 77, 93, 96, 126-127, 130, 139, 153, 265-266, 281-282, 295, 304, 310, 311, 313, 377, 380.
13. Isabel Gordon Carter, "Mountain White Folk-Lore: Tales from the Southern Blue Ridge," *Journal of American Folklore*, 38 (1925), 340-370.
14. The tales were published as *Jack Tales Told by Mrs. Maud Long of Hot Springs, N.C.*, I and II (Library of Congress: AAFS L47). The songs appear on LC/AAFS L21.
15. Carter, p. 340.
16. LC/AAFS L47, side 1, band 1.
17. Henry, pp. 20-32.
18. Henry, p. 23.
19. Henry, p. 32. The references to "grandfather Harmon," by comparison to the more complete family history given on pp. 20-23, should read "grandfather Hicks."
20. Chase, p. 2.
21. Carter, p. 340.
22. For the origins of the Harmons, see Harmon, I, pp. 1-16.
23. Henry, p. 32.
24. John Preston Arthur, *A History of Watauga County, North Carolina* (Richmond: Everett Waddey, 1915), pp. 19, 64.
25. Gaffney, pp. 244-245, 247-248; *Avery County Heritage* (Banner Elk, N.C., Puddingstone Press, 1976-1981), III, p. 110.
26. Gaffney, p. 73.
27. *Avery County Heritage*, III, p. 110.
28. Interview, 3 May 1985.
29. *Avery County Heritage*, III, pp. 92, 110.
30. Henry, p. 20.
31. Warner, p. 212.



“The Assailant in Disguise”: Old and New Functions of Urban Legends About Women Alone in Danger

by Mary Seelhorst

“I just remember how scary it was. It was just like a childhood horror story when he told it.”¹ This is not the reaction of a teenage girl to a suspenseful tale told late at night during a slumber party. Rather, it is the unsolicited analysis by a twenty-four-year-old male graduate student of his personal reaction to a story he had recently heard. Surprised? So was the woman in the story.

As he tells it, a woman returns to her car after grocery shopping. In her car is a nurse who asks her for a ride. On the pretense of going back to call her husband to tell him she will be late, the woman gets a security guard. When the nurse sees the guard coming, she runs away, but as she runs, her wig falls off and she turns out to be a man—who has left a hatchet in the car. It is one of a group of tales which folklorists call “urban legends,” a genre which is ripe for study, because the oral process which carries such stories is rapidly affected by changing circumstances of urban life and is continually altering old legends and even creating new ones.

As I was explaining my project to a friend, she asked me how I could call the story a legend, saying, “It sounds like crime to me.”² Well, it *is* crime. But more important, it is a narration about a recent local event which seems credible to both the narrator and the audience. Often it is believed to be a true occurrence, but seldom can any documentation be found. Even if the listener suspects the details to be produced by the narrator’s imagination, there is usually something about the experience that rings true. That *something* is what keeps the story alive. Passed by word of mouth

and sometimes by the media from town to town and state to state, attached to different locations and different people, told as having happened to a friend of a friend, or a friend of a relative, or a relative of a friend, the story always retains the same basic framework of events.³ Legend is similar to rumor in many ways, particularly in the way it is disseminated, but legends have a more complex narrative structure and are filled out with more details and dramatic action.⁴

An urban legend is a particularly modern type of legend in which events center around any of the trappings of a city lifestyle: cars, college dormitories, malls, microwaves, or any number of things peculiar to the twentieth century. Of course, these things have become so common that an "urban" legend can be found almost anywhere—we do not have to go to Chicago in order to hear one.

I collected three variants of the opening tale in North Carolina. Ken Kenkel, another graduate student in folklore at UNC-Chapel Hill found one in North Carolina and two in Kentucky, which he kindly let me use in my analysis. As I isolated the stable elements common to all performances, the disguise motif seemed to most readily distinguish this legend from others of its type, thus the name "The Assailant in Disguise."

Concealed danger is a common theme in urban legends, taking such forms as snakes in rugs, rats in chicken buckets, and hatchet men in the hall.⁵ But several of the published legends deal with one particular threatening situation: women alone who are in danger of being attacked. In his book *The Vanishing Hitchhiker*, Jan Brunvand prints three such legends, "The Boyfriend's Death," "The Babysitter and the Man Upstairs," and "The Assailant in the Backseat." These three share that central theme, as well as several other features that, upon analysis, reveal an underlying attitude held in common by the three tales.

But the legend that I collected, although it also features the theme of a woman alone in danger, differs significantly in other aspects. In order to analyze those differences and their possible meanings, I will print one text from a performance of "The Assailant in the Backseat" and one of "The Assailant in Disguise," with the stable core elements bracketed. What is bracketed will contain some of the variable narrative details also, but the idea should be clear. I selected these versions to print based on their brevity and the ease of isolating the stable elements.

I will then compare the two stories and discuss the function of "Disguise," illustrated with comments by several informants in an effort to bring to light the conscious and perhaps subconscious meanings. As Linda Degh states in her article "The Belief Legend in Modern Society," "the legend corresponds to a basic mental attitude composed of conscious and unconscious functions. The attitude itself is not subject to modifications, but social and historical changes may influence the nature of the legend more than they do any other genre of folklore."⁶

The Assailant in the Back Seat

[A lady] has been grocery shopping [very late at night]. She lived on Highway 26 and as she drove home she noticed a Volkswagen truck following her very closely. She turned into her driveway and the truck followed her. She didn't know what to do. Finally she got out of the car and [the man] in the truck did the same. He came toward her with a hammer. [He opened the door in the back of the car and there was a man hiding on the floor.] The truck driver had seen him get in while the woman was in the store and had followed her [to make sure she would not be harmed].

In a variant of this tale, the woman pulls into a gas station where the attendant spies the man in the back seat. He draws her out of the car by telling her that the bill she gave him is counterfeit. Once she is safely inside the station, he tells her there is a man in her back seat.⁷

The Assailant in Disguise

The story is that this [woman] who was the acquaintance, [had been shopping] at South Square Mall over in Durham, and she came out to her car. And this was August when it was real hot, and there in the back seat of the car was this old woman and the old woman was just prostrate with heat. She said she was exhausted, she'd been sick, and that she really needed a ride home, would she please take her? [And this woman said: "Oh sure, I'd be glad to, but I have to go back for something."] And so she went back in the mall and [came out with a security guard], and the security guard got the little old woman out of the car. And lo and behold [it was a man, dressed up, with a hatchet under his coat].⁸

In one maverick version, the woman does not recognize the danger, but returns to her car to find that the old woman is gone. It is only upon later reading in the newspaper about a woman attacked in her car by a man dressed as an old lady that she realizes she had a close call. Two informants report that the man is disguised as a nurse. A medical student claimed to have heard this version from a male hospital employee. A wide range of reasons are given for needing a ride home, extending from heat exhaustion to being cold; likewise the weapon and the method of its concealment vary from tale to tale.

The unvarying elements, however, teach us the most about societal attitudes. Let us compare the two legends to see how those attitudes differ.

Darkness and seclusion set the mood for "The Assailant in the Back Seat," effectively playing upon our fear of the unknown to prepare us for the suspenseful events to come. Narrators emphasize that the woman is alone and headed for a rural destination late at night, because they know, as we all do, how such a tale should be constructed to achieve the proper apprehension of terror in the audience.

But there is nothing about the setting of "Disguise" that warns us about the nature of the legend. Here the woman has just finished shopping, and the entire action takes place in the mall parking lot. The situation clearly

implies that is it daylight, and we all know from experience how crowded a mall parking lot can be. The attacker knows it too, and so wisely does not depend on seclusion to gain entry into the woman's car. It is almost as though he learned a lesson from the failure of the "Back Seat" assailant; unlike the attacker who is readily identified once he is seen, this man conceals his true appearance. Although the woman cannot avoid seeing him, he has actually reduced the chances of being identified as dangerous by becoming a trustworthy character. Grandmothers and "women in white" are known as benevolent, compassionate people, adding a psychological blanket to his cloak.

It is all the more amazing then that the woman is somehow able to penetrate his disguise and actively go for help without making him suspicious. By her action, she shows herself to be a level-headed, quick-thinking woman. How different she is from the woman in "Back Seat" and others like her who are passively awaiting rescue! Whether the passive woman is locked in a car while her boyfriend goes for help, locked in her dorm room awaiting her roommate's return, or baby-sitting sleeping children, she is terrified but helpless to remove herself from the dangerous situation. That deed is left to someone else: a heroic rescuer.

In both legends, the size of the "rescuer" role is inversely proportional to the responsibility the woman assumes in her own safety. Where she is unaware of the threat, as in "Back Seat," or prevented by her fears from acting, her rescuer is wholly or mostly responsible for her safety, and furthermore he is *always* male. We know he is male because he frequently has a dialogue part or participates in protracted action so that the narrator must give him an identity. Contrast this to "Disguise," in which the role of security (or police) is so small that only one narrator specifies gender, and even he dropped the word "man" from his second rendition of the legend. I do believe, however, that the "security" which is summoned is assumed to be male in most cases, but the lack of specificity is a good indicator of the lessened importance that role plays in the final outcome.

Before the significance of this comparison can be assessed, we need to look at the demographics of "Back Seat" and "Disguise" to see if such variables may be important to the analysis. "Back Seat" and other "woman alone at night" legends were widely collected in the 1960's, with the published versions of "Back Seat" falling between 1964 and 1969. I have no doubt that this legend is still being told, though interest in its analysis may have declined. On the other hand, the earliest published report of the "Disguise" legend, as far as I can tell, is an effort by the Greensboro and Winston-Salem police departments to discredit the story as a rumor in October, 1983. Apparently the effort didn't work, because in 1985 Ann Landers published a letter in her syndicated column trying to dismiss the

tale.⁹ The seven variants I analyzed were also told during or after October, 1983. Of course my sample is too small for me to state unequivocally that "Disguise" constitutes a major new trend, but it does undoubtedly differ from "Back Seat" in many respects, and the evidence indicates that the differences may be tied to changing attitudes and new concerns of the 1980's.

The difference becomes more striking when we look at the age and gender of the narrators. Brunvand calls "Back Seat" and the other "woman alone" stories "Teenage Horrors," and the two articles on "Back Seat" published in *Indiana Folklore* use the same label. In the combined collection of eighteen texts, twelve narrators are teenagers or report having first heard the tale in high school; only six are past their teens at the time of narration, and they do not report when they first heard the tale. Fourteen of twenty informants are female, one is anonymous, and six are male, one of whom said that he heard it from his high school girlfriend. I recall having heard "Back Seat" and several other legends myself around 1970 or '71 at a late night ghost story session attended by a group of girls. Most of us did not believe the incidents had really happened, however, or if we did, we wouldn't admit belief. The stories were certainly scary, but the circumstances of their telling and the predictable patterns they followed removed them from the real world enough to allow us to believe they were "just stories." One of the "Back Seat" informants also reports a lack of belief among a high school audience, with the exception of "some of the girls."¹⁰

Although my informants were mostly women, there appear to be changes in age and sex in relation to dissemination and belief. Because of my own age (twenty-six) and limited collecting, all of my informants are college age or a few years older. Ken Kenkel's collecting comes from a similar group. One person in our collecting reports having heard the legend in high school. One graduate student even told me that it was her professor who told it to her. In fact, all of the collected variants were told to the informants either at work, in a graduate school setting, or by a relative.

Of the four female narrators from whom source information is available, two reported hearing it from men either directly or once removed. It was also a man who, with a horrified look on his face, first told me the story after he had just heard it from another man. Within this limited sample the dissemination pattern is professional and working people of both sexes telling the story to their peers and to the college age group, rather than the pattern of teenagers telling peers and parents, or older people recalling a legend they heard in high school, as is the case with "Back Seat." This is further evidence that "Disguise" has psychological functions other than those related to the "sexual maturation of young girls,"¹¹ an interpretation given to many of the "woman alone" stories. Brunvand suggests that the messages carried by these legends may be of two types: the primary,

more explicit meaning of warning or example, and the secondary, suggested message that may “provide deeper criticisms of human behavior or social conditions.”¹²

The primary message of “The Assailant in Disguise” is fairly obvious. “How did she know—how did she figure it?” asked one informant. “I probably would have driven her off wherever she wanted to go and gotten hatcheted.”¹³ The killer’s clever disguise is evidence of his premeditated intention and of his intelligence, which requires at least as much intelligence on the part of the woman to counteract. By her example, the woman in the story has changed at least the attitudes, if not the behavior, of those who hear the legend about her astute perception of danger: “... I don’t think I’d be afraid of an old lady if they were in my car. I will *now*, but I wouldn’t before.”¹⁴ No longer confined to dark and deserted areas, crime has become so pervasive in real life and in movies and television that we must be wary of it even in everyday social interactions. As they discussed the story, most informants referred to movies, television, or actual news events either as analogies or as the provocation for the performance of the story. More so than media reports or reenactments, the legend is vitally important to the narrators because of its proximity to their homes and because it is told on good authority. Often a newspaper account is cited, usually once removed from the narrator.

Another vitalizing element is found in several variants of “Disguise”: the escape of the assailant. As you read these very words you are in danger of being attacked by the assailant still at large. Although the correlation of escape with a certain type of story is not significant, escape does function as a motivation for telling the story. The man who first told me the story became agitated as he told it, and said that he had to tell his sister about it because she lives in Raleigh, where the attack occurred.

But when I asked one informant why her mother had told her the story, there were two answers: the explicit cautionary warning and “because it’s exciting in a way. It’s like a gossip story.”¹⁵ Another informant put it this way:

B: I just thought it was a really exciting thing.

M: Exciting or frightening?

B: Both. It sounded so unusual and it—it just [pause]
sounded so haunting. That sort of thing attracts me.¹⁶

This “sort of thing” attracts quite a large number of people, if the success of horror films is any indication. But what distinguishes this particular story from the multitude of assaults reported by the media each day is the disguise motif. Our horror of disguise appears not only in modern forms, such as the particularly shocking surprise at the end of *Twilight Zone: The Movie*, but also in Halloween customs and the centuries-old fairy

tale “Little Red Riding Hood.” Disguised characters can also take on a highly personal meaning, as in one narrator’s association:

I had this little childhood nightmare when I was a kid that I would go on a ride with my grandpa, and then suddenly he would grab his face a la *Mission Impossible* and pull it off and turn out to be some criminal. And this reminded me of that sort of surprise terrorist.¹⁷

In a discussion of dreams and fairy tales in *The Uses Of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim states that we cannot control our dreams consciously, but that a fairy tale

is very much the result of common conscious and unconscious content having been shaped by the conscious mind, not of one particular person, but the consensus of many in regard to what they view as universal human problems, and what they accept as desirable solutions. If all these elements were not present in a fairy tale, it would not be retold generation after generation.¹⁸

I do not wish, nor am I qualified, to delve into psychoanalysis as Bettelheim does, but he does make one point regarding “Little Red Cap,” as he calls it, that is applicable to “The Assailant in Disguise,” at least by analogy: “It is as if Little Red Cap is trying to understand the contradictory natures of the male by experiencing all aspects of his personality: the selfish, asocial, violent, potentially destructive tendencies of the id (the wolf); the unselfish, social, thoughtful, and protective propensities of the ego (the hunter).” This conflict seems to be applicable in two ways.

First, from my observations and the comments on record, it is apparent that each informant has been consciously struggling with the dichotomy between the humanitarian desire to help those in need and the obvious consequence of such a desire, as is implied by the “Disguise” legend: “You don’t want to immediately distrust people around you.... You want to be able to trust an elderly lady. Visions of Grandma and things like that.”²⁰ The legend justifies an act of rejection that would normally be unacceptable to the narrator,²¹ an act that is of necessity a survival tactic in an urban environment. How different this legend is from classical and biblical legends in which the disguised strangers welcomed into the home are really gods, and kindness is rewarded with riches instead of ridiculed by death. But the modern inclination to turn away pleas for help becomes more understandable when we recognize that modern communication heaps upon us more tragedies and requests for assistance than any one person can manage, either practically or psychologically. Legends are an appropriate and effective way to release the guilt and frustration arising from our inadequacy.

The second conflict is not recognized as consciously as the first. Although male/female interaction has been a featured theme of legends for centuries, “The Assailant in Disguise” gives it a new twist that coincides with a

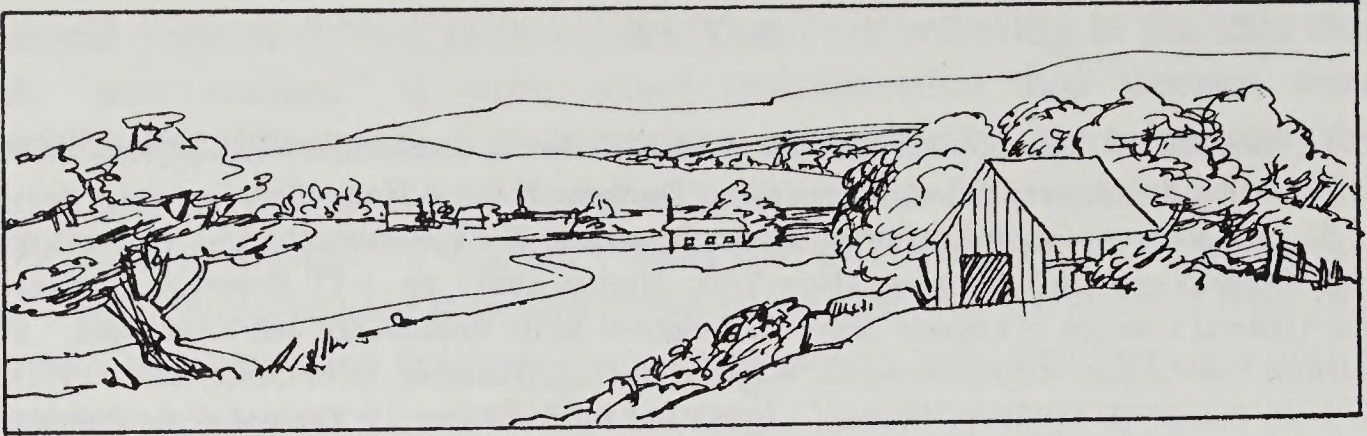
general popular culture phenomenon. I am not referring to the idea that the “new woman” is more active and assertive than women were previously, although that is recognized in a primary, conscious way by those who tell the tale. Only one informant mentioned the secondary conflict specifically, saying: “I wouldn’t think that *any* stranger is out to deceive me, but...in particular it would make me suspicious of women who just have more masculine features. You know, every now and then you notice someone—you sort of wonder to yourself, ‘Is this person transsexual’ or something like that....”²²

The possibility of real sex change operations and the “coming out of the closet” of many people who subscribe to various alternative sexual lifestyles have been relatively recent occurrences. The popularity of transvestite Boy George and his band, Culture Club, is paralleled by a general interest in, if not transsexual, then at least androgynous dress and behavior, epitomized by singing star Michael Jackson. Likewise, many women are experimenting, not only with sexual roles but also with occupational roles reserved for men before, such as the role of Vice President of the United States. Apart from the styles and preferences of individuals singled out for media attention, men in general have been encouraged to accept the part of themselves that has been traditionally considered “feminine,” characterized by expressing emotion and showing compassion. The range of possibilities for interpretation, psychoanalytic and otherwise, of just this one feature of the legend is enormous: men distrusting women who look (and act?) like men, women who want to trust the “new man” but are afraid of what violence might lie just beneath the surface.

These are only suggested interpretations which seem to be justified even with the small sample of variants available. My findings indicate that this is an old tale-type embodying some new concerns of our modern, liberated American culture. Although women, gays, and other minority groups have been granted some recognition and a measure of acceptance in the last twenty years, the change of social attitude is still largely a superficial one. While the government creates legislation that can sometimes enforce change, each one of us must come to terms with our own opinions and solutions to the problems of crime and morality, masculinity and femininity. Legends such as “The Assailant in Disguise” reduce the concepts to a personal conscience, without a reduction of their importance. For it is only with individual resolution to these problems that change becomes more substantial and permanent in any society.

NOTES

1. Bob Harned, tape recorded interview by Mary Seelhorst, Chapel Hill, N.C., 28 Sept. 1984.
2. Mitzi Sobol, personal communication, Durham, N.C., 3 Nov. 1984.
3. For sources of legend definition see Jan Brunvand, *The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends and Their Meanings* (New York: Norton, 1981), pp. 1-17; Robert A. Georges, "The General Concept of Legend: Some Assumptions to Be Reexamined and Reassessed," in *American Folk Legend: A Symposium*, ed. Wayland D. Hand (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1971), pp. 1-19; Patrick B. Mullen, "Modern Legend and Rumor Theory," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 9 (1972), pp. 95-109.
4. Mullen, p. 98
5. Ann Carpenter, "Cobras at K-Mart: Legends of Hidden Danger," *What's Going On? (In Modern Texas Folklore)*, ed. Francis Abernathy (Austin: Encino, 1976), pp. 44-45.
6. Linda Degh, "The Belief Legend in Modern Society: Form, Function and Relationship to Other Genres," in *American Folk Legend: A Symposium*, ed., Wayland D. Hand (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1971), pp. 55-68.
7. Xenia E. Cord, "Further Notes on 'The Assailant in the Back Seat,'" *Indiana Folklore* 2 (1969), pp. 47-54.
8. Carol Lassiter, tape recorded interview by Ken Kenkel, Chapel Hill, N.C., 6 Oct. 1983.
9. Two articles give brief accounts of the legend: Donald W. Patterson, "Erie Hatchet Story a Rumor, Police Say," *Greensboro News and Record*, 29 Oct. 1983, p. A4; "Ann Landers," *Durham Morning Herald*, 14 Feb. 1985, p. 2C. Another article not cited mentions the legend in a discussion of rumors: Jean Caldwell, "Say, did you hear about the old lady at the mall?" *Raleigh News and Observer*, 5 Dec. 1983, p. 11A.
10. Carlos Drake, "The Killer in the Back Seat," *Indiana Folklore*, 1 (1968), p. 108.
11. Linda Degh, "'The Roommate's Death' and Related Dormitory Stories in Formation," *Indiana Folklore*, 2 (1969), p. 74.
12. Brunvand, p. 11.
13. Lassiter.
14. Suzanne Huffman, tape recorded interview by Mary Seelhorst, Chapel Hill, N.C., 9 Nov. 1984.
15. Huffman.
16. Bob Harned, tape recorded interview by Mary Seelhorst, Winston-Salem, N.C., 9 Nov. 1984.
17. Harned, 28 Sept. 1984.
18. Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1975), p. 36.
19. Bettelheim, p. 172.
20. Beverly Schultz, tape recorded interview by Mary Seelhorst, Chapel Hill, N.C., 13 Nov. 1984.
21. Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman, *The Psychology of Rumor* (New York: Knopf, 1975), p. 36.
22. Harned, 9 Nov. 1984.



1985 Cratis D. Williams Prize Essay

The Art of Meditation in Afro-American Folksong: Roy Dunn's Holy Blues

by Luke A. Powers

The blood relationship of blues and gospel is as strongly disavowed by some as it is affirmed by others. In song-style there is undoubtedly a great deal of interpenetration so the battle is usually waged on ideological grounds. Early in the argument's history, Mahalia Jackson, the gospel singer, drew the line of demarcation based upon the singer's reason for singing. In what became a famous rap on the subject, she said: "Blues are the songs of despair, but gospel songs are the songs of hope. When you sing them you are delivered of your burden. You have a feeling that there is a cure for what's wrong."¹ Others saw more similarity in the motivations for singing the blues and singing gospel. On this side of the argument the blues is usually seen as the offspring of the Negro spirituals. Sidney Bechet explains the kinship between the sacred and secular forms: "One was praying to God and the other was praying to what's human. It's like saying, 'Oh, God, let me go,' and the other saying, 'Oh, Mister, let me be.'"²

No matter which position is accepted, one must admit that blues and gospel singers hold this particular rap subject in common. This explanation-rap is reminiscent of the etiological slave-tales, as words are used to incarnate psychological attitudes ever shadowy in alteration. Controversy is often rich soil for rapping, but usually the entertainment value overrides the argumentation. In this blues-gospel rap though, one finds the teller

more intent than usual on the truth of his claims. Whether uttered pro or con, by bluesman or sanctified singer, raps that pose the question “The blues and gospel are twin expressions of the same psychological motivation, are they not?” are essentially didactic. Like the etiological tale-teller, the blues-gospel rapper is trying to convince an audience to say, “Yes, that *is* the way the world is.” The rap, or argument, is a map for a psychologically unified view of the world. Using Jackson’s hope-despair dichotomy, the two positions are (1) the blues are the illegitimate child of the spiritual. They are self-indulgent, born of sinful despair. Or (2) the blues and gospel are faces of the same coin; spiritual understanding is a marriage of hope and despair.

In the time of Jackson and Bechet, the margin between sanctified and unsanctified music was broader in black and white communities alike. One might expect a bluesman to have been more on the defensive in asserting the sanctity of his craft. In the post-World War II flood of secularism in both black and white America, the line between the genres became less defined. The controversy remains, but for the most part is now an academic question. The rap lives on, too. Perhaps it only lives the protracted life of a terminal case kept alive by the backward-looking folklorist. Nevertheless, though it be a hybrid of blacks’ verbal talents and whites’ historical inquiries, the blues-gospel rap survives. Particularly among some bluesmen arguing the ultimate unity of the two forms, the rap has lost none of its former currency and perception.

Roy Dunn is a country blues guitarist and singer from Atlanta. In his mid-sixties, Roy has been a professional entertainer periodically since his late teens. His first performing experiences were accompanying on guitar a couple of uncles and his brother Fred in the Dunn Brothers Gospel Quartet. As his voice matured, Roy subsequently took the high tenor role in the numerous permutations of the original Dunn Brothers group. Roy quit playing the guitar entirely after the last Dunn Brothers quartet disbanded around 1939. He did not professionally perform the blues until the 1950’s. At this time he was playing blues, rock’n’roll, and some gospel. He soon forsook the rock’n’roll style after a group-member lost the whole band’s road earnings in an unsuccessful chase of two different women in the same bar. Blues and gospel have been distinctively linked in his present style. As Roy puts it himself in the opening rap of a North Carolina concert October 21, 1984, at Carrboro’s Rhythm Alley:

... And so you know the blues and gospel just one step
apart.

I was a *blues* boy
before I come to be a gospel *man*
[laughs] then I turn back around
and come to be a *blues* man.

... I’m gonna show you the difference between, both of
a kind, you understand.³

This short rap is more than an attempt to place himself within a context easily recognizable for the all-white audience. Blues and gospel come to mean more than just terms of a genre. Roy's choice of the word "turn" gives blues and gospel religious connotations, the yin and yang of his musical expression. In the hours before the concert I had asked Roy of his gospel and blues stylistic roots. If this rap was in part an answer to my query, Roy was more intent on responding to the spirit rather than the letter of the terms.

A sense of transience can be elaborated into an ecstasy. Singing one's troubles away with the blues can pitch the performer to an oblivion of self. Following his rap on blues-gospel, Roy explains how the blues "works":

Well, listen.
Ain't *no* man
or *no* woman
or *nobody*
can't do nothing
less they done had some trouble on down the line
somewhere.

And if you want to hear a good spiritual song
the man is worried about something.
...Somebody's done slapped him kicked him around beat
him up stomped him all in the face,
or his old lady done quit him.

And so when that joker get worried
he can bring you anything you want,
and so that's what I'm gonna do.⁴

This rap elucidates this ecstasy of the blues. But this achievement of an ecstasy cannot be communicated in words left to their dictionary meanings. Roy's repetition of the "no's" is a rhetorical device that indicates the beginnings of this ecstatic process: at the start, the blues are overwhelmingly a negation or alienation from one's self. Instead of just saying prosaically, "everyone's had the blues," Roy emphasizes the negatives. Only at the end of the first section does he offer the more psychologically neutral "some" and "somewhere."

In the section following Roy recreates a blues' passion play. He progresses from slaps to stomping; it is the drama of the spirit's disembodiment. The final part suggests the redemption the bluesman, freed from the limits of the self, can offer to his audience. Once he has lost his self, the bluesman sings with a unified view of the world. As Roy implies, from this realm of unity he can "bring you anything you want." Having left the self, the singer becomes the song. This unity of singer and song is a point of infinity where the imaginative possibilities become real for an audience. The "joker" is analog to the sanctified singer who claims that the Spirit is singing through him and that the words are not his own.

Two songs of this performance stood out from the rest in spiritual subtlety and imaginative power. "Over There" is a gospel-like number sung at the close of the first set. "Mr. Charlie" is a cante-fable that Roy did late in the second or final set. Both these songs provide what the rap, "how the blues work," intimated. Though musically divergent, both could be classed as ecstatic holy blues. "Over There" has the gospel singer's seemingly endless, mutable phrase coupled with ska-like delay in chord progression within each stanza unit. Roy can keep banging away at the A-chord as long as he has to before hitting the tonic D-chord at the end of the final phrase of the stanza. Hence, the form of each stanza is unique in length and emphasis. Periodically comes the refrain accompanied with the guitar's droning E-chord. Within this loose three-chord format, Roy is free to expand and contract the lines as the spirit wills. In contrast, "Mr. Charlie" (at least the sung part) is standard twelve-bar blues in the key of E. During the story part of the song, Roy stays with an E-chord, punctuating his sections with highly stylized blues riff in the vein of Lightnin' Hopkins. "Big Boy Henry," Richard Henry of New Bern, N.C., also sings a version of this song. One is tempted to suspect that the song has currency throughout the Piedmont of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Common to these two versions is the spoken tale of a boy adopted by wealthy Mr. Charlie, a mill-owner. The boy's only responsibility in return for Mr. Charlie's largesse is to tell Mr. Charlie if his mill catches fire. It does, and the boy sings the news to Mr. Charlie.

In appearance, "Mr. Charlie" and "Over There" would seem to share little. The first is a bawdy fable, variant in a tradition, told in the third person. The second is a gospel-like "call to witness," in the first person. Yet, if one notes the similarities of meaning and patterns of symbolism, the resemblance of the two songs grows clearer. Just as his blues-gospel rap pointed to a unity of the two genres, the artistic structures in these two songs indicate their likeness. From the motif of the reunion of father, mother and son to Roy's ecstatic vocables, the two songs share in the study of a unified view of the world.

Roy's blues-gospel rap prefigured the attainment of the ecstasies of song through a negation of self. The old self must be gone out of before one can return to a rejuvenated self with a unified view of the world. Both "Mr. Charlie" and "Over There" tell stories that are meditations on this departure from the self that precedes the unified self. The separation from the mother is the first step in this assumption process. In "Over There," Roy gives what *seems* to be a straightforward reminiscence of his youth. Interestingly, he says he was "only twelve," a traditional age of spiritual confirmation and adulthood in the church. It matters not so much whether this first stanza is reminiscence of an actual occurrence as how Roy imaginatively recasts this psychological feeling of separation from his mother. If in fact he did spend much of his youth being raised by his grandmother,

it may well have been for mundane, undramatic reasons. What is significant is Roy's method of telescoping the action to dramatize this "you can't go home again"-to-the-mother parable. The indistinctness of plot and motivation in the first scene of this song adds richness; the audience must supply the details from their imagination sympathetic to the singer's. Roy is the stage director, though, with suggestions of the imminent separation of mother and son. After a night of spiritual agony, the young Roy travels "over there" to his mother's house. But the unexpected occurs, he meets his mother on the way. She appears like a ghostly visitant, imploring his pledge to meet her "over there." Faintly ritualistically, he gives her his right hand to seal the spiritual compact.

Much of the mystery is cleared up in the second stanza. Roy here relates to the intimate audience that his mother has recently passed away. He amends to this, "This is the truth." Now the opening scene's import is manifest. Though it may be literal truth that he met his mother on the path home that day, the event is transfigured into the opening of a meditation. The strangeness of the encounter implies the figurative death of the mother as she ceases to be the center of his world. That he does not make it back to the house of his mother, the sanctuary of youth, is, by itself, just figurative treatment of the passage from childhood to adolescence. What gives the scenario its meditation character is the parallel separation in the following stanza: in his youth he went "over there" in the body; as an adult he desires communion with her in the spirit. He wants to "vacation in heaven," the spiritual household of the glorified mother and the heavenly Father.

In "Over There" the meditation begins in a far more personal manner with undivulged motivation. To work himself up in the spirit, he even makes mention of the factual death of his mother. "Over There" was the first song performance that Roy really seemed to sing in ecstasies. Late in the second set after he was well warmed up, he achieved a similar state of ecstasy with "Mr. Charlie." Less burdened by personal remembrance, Roy is explicit about this mother-son separation. In this song the meditation comes in the form of Roy play-acting the unnamed little boy. While the mother of "Over There" enforces the separation with a motherly homily that the young Roy should seek Christ first and then herself, the mother of "Mr. Charlie" displays the evil side of this point of separation. Harried by a number of children, she cannot give all the emotional support they need and she gets upset with her stuttering son. Unable to tell her what he wants for breakfast, the little boy's stutter becomes near hysteric. The mother responds to this without tenderness:

And so she rolled her hands up on her apron,
you know she walked off
and said, "Lord have mercy I don't know what I'm
gonna do with this child!" 5

This little boy “hits the road” with a flour sack full of clothes to look for a new home, a new father, and a new mother. In “Over There,” the young Roy becomes the adult Roy after the first stanza: Youth and age are unified by this common impulse to rejoin the mother. In “Mr. Charlie,” youth and age are united as Mr. Charlie’s search for a mate is tied together with the little boy’s search for a new mother. Two catastrophes must occur before the household is united: the little boy is first rejected by his mother, and then the mill burns down.

The road away from the self has no shoulders and the maps are only approximate. The road “over there” abounds with “turning sideroads.” When one gets lost, he must invoke the divine for directions. He must summon the divine residing within him by going out of the self driven by a rational intelligence. He moans. Roy narrates this passage out:

When your burden gets so hard
you can’t hold it
to Abraham
I have to moan
sometime
my mother told me,
“Son, don’t you never look back
on the road,
strike a little hymn
and moan sometime.”
Let her help you get your mind together.
I said, “Mmmmmmmm,
mmmmmmmm.”
You know I’m gonna take a vacation...⁶

The god manifests himself within the singer by engendering a sense of unity beyond the dualities of male and female, or divine and human. By strange cause and effect Roy’s mother answers his moan to father Abraham. She gives him some practical advice: Don’t spend your life looking back in remorse. The moan calls one’s mind to the present where the world is indivisible.

The little boy has not really found his home when Mr. Charlie sticks him out at the mill. He has not yet formed a self or identity that he needs to go out of. He babytalks, referring to himself as “me.”

He must sing to communicate. “Mr. Charlie” is a parable of how one returns to the rejuvenated self after going temporarily out of the self. Just as Roy had to moan incommunicably in “Over There” to pass out of the self, now as the little boy he shows how one returns from the realm of the incommunicable. The little boy’s burst of song is the augury of the united self, represented by the trinity of little boy—Mr. Charlie—Miss Mary. His song jolts Mr. Charlie from his complacency and inactivity. He is galvanized from the lifeless isolation of one who says to the little boy, “Look son, I’m kinda old and retired,/and I don’t do nothing now.”⁷ Miss

Mary lets her hair down and he forgets his “old arthritis leg.”⁸ Once the little boy has opened the way for the reunion, the focus shifts from him to Mr. Charlie so completely that at the end of the song the ecstatic dance of the unified self is done by the revived Mr. Charlie. For Mr. Charlie’s boogie-woogie, Roy lets his guitar do the “talking.” The plaintive moan of the burdened self is replaced by the enraptured yelps of the unburdened self. Roy as singer has become the song; there is nothing more for him to sing at this point of unity so he plays through the dance of Mr. Charlie to the end of the song.

This is not to say that every song Roy performed that Sunday night was a meditational, holy blues. He sang his quota of .45-toting blues, the mean and ugly blues. These holy blues are songs of both hope and despair. They hope for a state of unity beyond the flux of our timebound lives; they despair over the anxiety of this life as recurrent as the pain of an arthritic leg. It is simple-minded glibness for Bruce Bastin to say of holy blues player Reverend Gary Davis, “In fact, Davis has never ceased to play the blues—he only stopped singing them.”⁹ Such a statement ignores the very distinctions the singers, Gary Davis among them, make. Any attempt to classify and understand folksong must originate in the song’s *raison d’être*, why the singer is singing at all. Lil Son Jackson has summarized the sin of the mean and ugly blues:

If a man feel hurt within side and he sing a church song then he’s asking God for help...if a man sing the blues it’s more or less out of himself...He’s not asking no one for help...But he’s expressin’ how he feel. He’s expressin’ it to someone and that fact makes it a sin you know....you’re tryin’ to get your feelin’s over to the next person through the blues, and that’s what makes it a sin.¹⁰

In Roy Dunn’s holy blues, the communication is directed within himself to the divine power latent in any human being and without himself to an audience, witnesses to this power manifested in song. White folklorists’ understanding of the blues has been hampered by deadly accuracy in deciding who stole whose verses or who copped whose riffs. In their frantic compilation of song genealogies, they often neglect the life and power of the present song born of a rich tradition. Such an overly analytic and categorical approach denies a bluesman like Roy Dunn of the mastery and point to his singing; the bluesman is creating a little world of unity from the vast tangles of tradition. Roy Dunn shapes as much as he passes on. Roy himself best explains the sanctity of this holy “I,” devoid of selfish egotism:

I’m one *step* [stamps his foot] from every other blues man you ever heard. I don’t play nothing just like nobody...I got my own style of music, that’s the only way to survive.

...whenever you hear me sing and play a song of some other blues man, he done passed and gone, he's dead. The man that's living and putting out his records and what he's doing I let him do that, cause see I don't have much [in common] with him. If I go to playing what he playing I ain't doing nothing.¹¹

The union of blues and gospel comes with Roy's communication of the rejuvenated self through the models set forth in "Mr. Charlie" and "Over There." These songs are holy or religious by nature of his sharing his own unified view of the world in an ecstatic moment with his audience. Though "Over There" contains lines of blues-like despair (e.g. "I begin to wonder/what will become of me"¹²), the victory of the meditation is apparent when Roy sings, "I am there"¹³ in the heaven where world is self and self is world. Importantly though, his ecstasy is temporary: he takes a "vacation" in heaven and must return to his worry, his unperfected self at odds with the world. It is a song of both hope and despair. Likewise, though "Mr. Charlie" ends on a more positive note, the model of unity here is not a static eternity, but a wedding of three selves into a dynamic household. What remains, ever alive and ever different, of the songs is the marriage of the singer's voice and the audience's imaginations; and what also remains for both singer and audience is the memory, neither begging hope nor giving despair, of the redemptive moments.

NOTES

1. Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 174.
2. Levine, pp. 236-7.
3. Roy Dunn, tape recorded concert at Rhythm Alley music club, Carrboro, NC, 21 Oct. 1984. Transcribed in Appendix III.
4. Dunn, see Appendix III.
5. Dunn, see Appendix I.
6. Dunn, see Appendix II.
7. Dunn, see Appendix I.
8. Dunn, see Appendix I.
9. Bruce Bastin, *Crying for the Carolines* (London: Studio Vista Limited, Blue Star House, Highgate Hill, 1971), p. 69.
10. Levine, p. 237.
11. Roy Dunn, tape recorded interview by Luke Powers during concert break, 21 Oct. 1984.
12. Roy Dunn, tape recorded concert, 21 Oct. 1984. See Appendix II.
13. Dunn, concert, see Appendix II.

APPENDIX I: "MR. CHARLIE" TEXT

DUNN: [Talking to the interviewer in the crowd] You'se the one talking about Mr. Charlie's Rolling Mill.

POWERS: What?

DUNN: Mr. Charlie. Mr. Charlie's Rolling Mill.

POWERS: Oh yeah!

DUNN: [Beginning to play the song on the guitar]
You know the old lady, used to roll about a mile and a quarter from where I live.
She had a bunch of children, you know.
So every morning, you know,
she used to ask all the children what they wanted for breakfast.
She had one little boy, you know
he couldn't talk too plain.
She got around to him said,
"What do you want for breakfast, son?"
Said, "Meemmeeemmee...",
he meant to say he wanted butter and bread.
And so she rolled her hands up on her apron,
you know she walked off
and said, "Lord have mercy I don't know what I'm gonna do with this child!"
So the little boy, you know,
he heard what his mother say
he didn't like that so hot.
So the next morning, you know,
he packed all his clothes in a flour sack,
decided he was gonna leave, you know.
So the man that owned the rolling mill about ten miles from there
named Mr. Charlie
And so Mr. Charlie walked up, you know, (he say to) Mr. Charlie,
say, "Meemmeeemmeeister Charchcharchcharlie."
By that time Mr. Charlie raised up and looked at him,
he said, "Boy, what you want?"
Said, "Meemmee want a home."
He said, "Son, you know you can't work."
Said, "Meemmeeemmee can work."
He said, "Look son, I'm kinda old and I'm retired,
and I don't do nothing now
but I got an old bunkhouse down the road
'bout a mile and quarter from here
I'll give you a home there
just as long as you can live
'vided you come up here and tell me if my mill catch on fire."
Little boy said, "Meemmemmee will."
So one morning, sure enough, Mr. Charlie's mill did catch on fire.
And so the little boy, you know, he come back over there to let him know,
Mr. Charlie
that his mill had caught on fire.

He come in there, said,
 "Meemmeemister Chchcharchchachar....youyouyouyou..."
 you know he point back down the road
 where he come from.
 Mr. Charlie say, "What'd you say, boy?"
 Said, "Youyouyouyou..." and kept pointing back down the road.
 So Mr. Charlie thought about what he done told the boy
 said, "look here son."
 He stopped playing [Roy stops playing and signals to harmonica player to
 stop].
 He said, "Look, son."
 Said, "I don't understand what you saying
 but if you can't talk it, sing it."
 And so the little boy started off like this [resumes playing and motions with
 his head to harmonica player]
 [Sings] "Oooooohhh, Mr. Charlie,
 you know your rolling mill is burning down.
 oooooh, Mr. Charlie
 you know your rolling mill is burning down."
 He said, "Son, if you ain't got no water,
 that old rolling mill will burn on down."
 [Talks] The little boy started to thinkin' about it,
 "Memmeeme let this mill burn down,
 Memmeemmemmee ain't gonna have nowhere to stay."
 He had to call Mr. Charlie one more time,
 [Sings] "Oooooohhh, Mr. Charlie,
 you know your rolling mill is burning,
 ooh Mr. Charlie,
 you know your rolling mill is burning down."
 Said, "Son if you got no water,"
 that old rolling mill will burn on down."
 [Talks] "Memmemmister Charlie don't know what I mean,
 memmeemmee better cacacall Mr. Charlie again,
 and tettetell Memmeemmister Chchchcharchcharlie what I memmemmean."
 He called him again.
 [Sings] "Oooooh, Mr. Charlie,
 me don't have no place to stay,
 oh Mr. Charlie,
 me don't have no place to stay."
 He said, "Son, you gonna have a home
 just as long as there is a day."
 [Talks] So Mr. Charlie got to thinking about, you know,
 he had so much money anyway,
 he wouldn't never spend it all.
 He just thinking about all that insurance, you know,
 he gonna get on that old mill.
 And so Miss Mary, you know,
 she always be sitting on the porch,
 a great big bonnet on her head,
 always crocheting something.
 He stop, Mr. Charlie stop,
 [Yells] "Mary!" [Dead silence, all accompaniment stops]
 "Hey, Mary!"

By that time Miss Mary heard Mr. Charlie.
 He had never called that loud before.
 And Miss Mary, you know, [softly begins to play guitar]
 you know she walked out on the porch
 took that crocheting bag
 threw it back in the chair,
 “woooaah,”
 she took that big roller out behind
 and took the bobby-pins out
 that old hair she had
 hung way down cross her hip.
 And Mr. Charlie look up there and see that,
 he start getting aroused
 when he see Miss Mary hair down,
 it straightened up
 walking back up toward the house
 and that old arthritis leg
 it make old Charlie stop,
 [Yells] said, “Owww!”
 [Yells] “Owwwww!” [Dead silences follow each of the next four phrases for
 several seconds before Roy resumes playing]
 [Yells] “Meet me, Mary!”
 He went skipping back doing the boogie-woogie,
 here’s what Mr. Charlie did [skiffle beat and harmonica solo through twelve
 bar measure to the end of the song].
 [Yells] Mr. Charlie’s rolling mill!

APPENDIX II: “OVER THERE” TEXT

Manager [in the front row] Feeling the spirit tonight, Mr. Dunn?

Roy Dunn: Well see, I tell you see, I tell the people, you understand, I was wanting to
 let them know...the difference between blues and gospel.
 Just one step apart.
 And I’m gonna let you know what I’s doing out there in that gospelfield
 [begins to strum the chords, feeling out the song, while his accompanist
 solos on the guitar]
 That’s “what it is,”
 that’s what Jackie Gleason used to tell you [laughs and then begins to sing].

 When I was only
 only twelve, get it on...
 My mother told me ’bout a man
 who could save you
 from all your sins

I tell her I had a worry
I went on home to my grandma's house
spent a night
over there

And when I got up in the morning
can't you hear?
over there to my mother's
I met my mother that morning

oh I gave her my right hand
oh yes
Well I met her on the way
Amen

She was talking
about a land

And I promised
I would meet her
over there
over there, promised land

Refrain:
I'm gonna take my vacation in heaven
Won't somebody come on?
Take it over there, go with me
Oh yeah

My old mother
this is the truth [near spoken]
She laid down and died
she was 86 years old
Estella Dunn my own mother
to the heaven, promised land
Oh yeah

I promised I would meet her
Lord I would meet her
over there, midnight
the promised land

She was singing
Lord and praying
All the way

She gone where
no more trials
and tribulations
telephone my rock
over there

Sometimes
I begin to wonder
what will become of me
but I'm going
try and meet my mother
over yonder in that promised land
over there, in sight

promised land
where there's no more
turning sideroads
gather round me Lord
over there

Refrain:

I'm gonna take my vacation
won't you take it over there with me

When your burden gets so hard
you can't hold it
to Abraham
I have to moan
sometime
my mother told me
son, don't you never look back
on the road
strike a little hymn
and moan sometime
let her help you get your mind together
I said, "Mmmmmm,
mmmmm."
you know I'm gonna take a vacation
Where there no more sorrow
trials and tribulation
over there
oh yeah
nothing but peace
I am there
over there
oh sacred hand make me full
when I go
over there

Refrain:

I'm gonna take my vacation in heaven
over there
with you oh Lord
with me

[Speaks] Look I hate to stop when I get started. But this time, you see the boy here, I better take a break. But I tell you, I will be back. And if you stick around here is yet more to come. Let's stick [or take?] one. I be back.

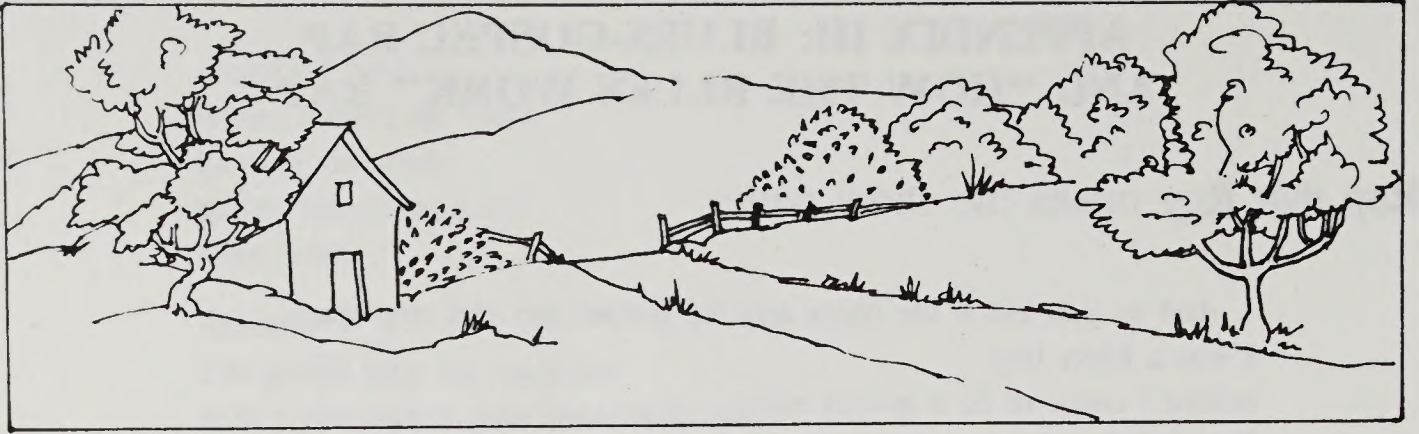
APPENDIX III: BLUES-GOSPEL RAP AND "HOW THE BLUES WORK" RAP

Rap that Roy opens the show with:

...And so you know the blues and the gospel just one step apart.
I was a *blues* boy
before I come to be a gospel *man*
[laughs] then I turn back around
and come to be a *blues* man.
I got this encouraged, you understand,
and I went back to the blues
so they paying off, you understand,
and I'm going to give you a little bit of blues.
And I'm gonna show you the difference between, both of a kind, you understand,
and that's what we gonna do.
And I play the first selection
that I come on with
is telling you how the blues works.

Well listen.
Ain't no man,
or no woman
or nobody
can't do nothing
less they done had some trouble on down the line
somewhere.
And if you wanta hear a good spiritual song
the man is worried about something.
That's what make him giddy-up and go,
that's what Boxcar Willie say [laughs].
And man when a man play the blues
he worried about something.
Somebody done slapped him kicked him around beat him up stomped him all the
face,
or his old lady done quit him.
Something done happened to him.
And so when that joker get worried
he can bring you anything you want,
and so that's what I'm gonna do.

We gonna try to attempt to play,
I tell you,
the first song's gonna be "Blues Ain't Nothing But
A Good Man Feeling Bad."
[plays the song]



1985 W. Amos Abrams Prize Co-Winner

Mountain Breed: Western North Carolina Tales

by Sandra Elingburg

The environment in which one lives aids in molding and developing that person's character. The geographical characteristics of the surroundings often seem to impress themselves on the individual. The people of the mountains of western North Carolina, where I was born, have often appeared to observers as a reflection of the ancient, weathered mountains that surround them.¹ These people can be stubborn, are independent and self-reliant, maintain their own code of honor, and have a genuine respect and love for their world.

One cannot spend much time among my family and mountain friends without witnessing a streak of stubbornness that seems as old as the mountains themselves. The Honorable William Styles, District Court Judge in Buncombe County, told me a story concerning the early years of Asheville. This story provides an excellent example of such stubbornness.

The Mayor of Asheville at the time, Mr. Cathy, decided to build a city hall. It was to be placed beside the County Court House. The only problem was that while the Court House was built on solid ground, the city hall would have to be constructed on fill dirt as the land dropped sharply where Mr. Cathy wanted to build. The people objected, but Mr. Cathy was firm. As Judge Styles tells it:

... they said, "You'll never make a building that big stand up in that fill dirt."
Cathy's retort was that he had designed him a city hall, and he would build it if he had to dig to the hinges of Hell for the foundation.

Once the people of the town realized Mayor Cathy had made up his mind, they accepted the fact that the city hall would be built, and on that site. They continued grumbling, but they knew nothing would change his mind now.

In order to live in the often harsh environment of the mountains, the people have had to learn to be independent. But along with this independence comes a willingness to help one's neighbor when he has need. In 1916, this was vividly illustrated when a tremendous flood destroyed Biltmore, Gerton, Bat Cave, and many other communities in the Asheville area. When the waters retreated and the extent of the damage was known, those people who had escaped without loss gave food and money to help those less fortunate. People outside the area offered to help, but it was said that they were told, "Thank you, but we think we'll take care of our own."

Strength often seems to be inborn in these self-reliant people. They face the hardship without complaint and do whatever must be done. My great-aunt, Hattie Oates, is a good example. She tells of her childhood:

My mother died when I was eight. The baby was two months old and there was two boys between her and me, and we went to Greenville, South Carolina, that fall and lived down there that winter with one of my aunts. And then we moved to Asheville, and from that time on, I started cooking and keeping house and taking care of the children. I used to go to school, and back then we didn't even have bread to make sandwiches. We made cornbread or biscuits and I would get our lunch ready and let the other children go on to school, and then I would take my little sister and carry her and my lunch and go to school.

When I asked about carrying the baby to school, she explained:

One year, we lived over at Pleasant Grove, and they had a meeting. They had school in the church over there, and this man, he was going to teach school, wanted to meet the parents and wanted all the children to be there. And I remember he said, "All the children that are coming to school, hold up your hand." I didn't hold mine up because I never thought about that he would let me take Vinnie (the baby) with me. And after it was over, he said to me, "Why didn't you hold up your hand? Aren't you coming to school?" I said, "No, I have to take care of my little sister." And, of course, I had her with me, and he said, "You bring her right on to school." And he said, "She can just play around in the room. She won't bother me nor she won't bother anybody else." So that's how come me to start taking her to school.

Aunt Hattie gave no sign of resentment at having to give up her childhood. The closest she came to expressing any regret is in telling how much she wanted to go barefoot.

Papa never would let me go barefoot. He always bought me really nice shoes for that day and time. And I wanted to go barefooted but he...and I would ask him why and he said, "Well, I don't want my cook in the kitchen barefooted."

In talking further with Aunt Hattie, I was reminded of the unspoken code of honor evident in this area. Throughout my childhood, I heard stories from my father, Robert (Bob) Grant, concerning Dr. Bond, a man he greatly admired. As Dad tells it:

When he was a boy, he came to Bat Cave, as a boy, and somebody got sick...and they couldn't get the doctor and he died. And he (Dr. Bond) promised them that when he got grown he would come back as a doctor. So he did.

There were many stories told of Dr. Bond. Once a small boy in the community fell onto a stake, driving it through his body. Dr. Bond was said to have sat up days and nights with him and, by sheer will as much as by medical skill, kept him alive. Dad also tells of a flu epidemic so severe that Dr. Bond spent weeks traveling from house to house. During this time, he never went to bed. The people of the community volunteered to do his driving, and the only sleep Dr. Bond got was in the jeep going to the next house.

At this time there was no hospital within fifty square miles. Dr. Bond was determined to build one. My Dad relates Dr. Bond

finally got the people together and they built what they called The Valley Clinic. He tried to secure aid from the state and the government, but come to find out, you have to have so much...so he got the people together and they built the little hospital.

Having heard these and many other stories about this remarkable man, I was surprised when I asked Aunt Hattie for her version of the following story:

It was said that Dr. Bond once operated on a woman who would have died without surgery. He operated on the kitchen table under a swinging kerosene lantern while he held a shotgun on the husband, who objected to the surgery, with the other hand.

Aunt Hattie was silent for a moment, then said:

He wrote up in his story, I'll tell you frankly, it wasn't so. He sure wrote it up. He had lots of tales. Said he was the only doctor in 500 square miles. [laughter] It was in *Reader's Digest*. Right after that *Digest* came out, my father was sick and Dr. Lynch, who lived over there this side of Fairview, came to see him and I was sorta hot and I said to him, I said, "Dr. Lynch, did you see the latest issue of *Reader's Digest*?" And he said, "Yes." I said, "What did you think of that article?" And he said, "Oh, well, if that's the way they have of getting money to do things with, well...."

Dr. Bond had broken the code. Apparently it is permissible to exaggerate or tell tall tales within the community but not to go outside the group and tell them to make money. He had made the mountain people look ignorant, and this was resented. Aunt Hattie remained true to her code of honor, adding:

Dr. Bond did a lot of good here, and it was good to start that clinic and all, but I never did think too much of the articles, because I never thought of telling something that was not true at all.

Judge Styles told me several tales which add a curious twist to this “mountain honor.” Many of his favorite stories involve a man named Scott Dillingham. Mr. Dillingham was known to be a con artist even though he was a successful businessman. He had served time in a federal penitentiary for land fraud early in his career. Mr. Dillingham was a very intelligent man. He had passed the law exam with the highest grade ever made but was refused his license because of his character. The stories of his getting the best of someone made good tales, making him a legend in his own time. He never pretended to be anything he wasn’t; therefore, the consensus was, “You should have known you couldn’t get the best of Scott Dillingham.” But many continued to try.

Judge Styles tells this story on Scott:

In the early days, he set up an automobile business in the livery stable and had an automobile sitting out front of his place there, a very nice looking car. And a chap from Brevard came over to Asheville, and he knew Scott and decided he wanted to buy the car sitting out on the street. Scott says, “You don’t want that car. It won’t start. You have to push it.” And the fellow kept on, and finally Scott gave him a price. And he paid him and sent two black men out to push him off Valley Street, and they pushed him to the bottom of the hill. And the car had shown no signs of life so he got out and looked under the hood, and there was no engine. He came back, mad as hops, and told Scott, says, “Scott, you have defrauded me.” Says, “That car has got no engine.” Scott said, “I told you, you had to push it.”

Another of Judge Styles’s stories shows Mr. Dillingham’s willingness to stretch the truth:

He was in court one day, a law suit over some land out in the Barnardsville section that had come through his mother’s family. And during the course of the trial, Jimmy Rector, another lawyer...was Scott’s lawyer, and during the course of the trial, the question came up as to whether Scott’s mother was alive or not. And Jimmy is reported to have leaned back and said, “Scott, is your mother living or dead?” Scott leans up and says, “Which do you want?”

Having established their own code of honor, often mountaineers see violent action as justified and are reluctant to punish according to the law. Judge Styles related an interesting story concerning a man accused of aggravated assault.

James cut pulpwood for a living. He got in well past dark this particular day and there was some cornbread and some greens on the back of the stove, and he sat down to make his supper. And his twelve-year-old stepdaughter came running into the kitchen where he was and she said, “I’ve been up to Nora’s [pronounced Nor-ee]”—Nora was an aunt of James—“and Elbert was up there.” Elbert was

Nora's brother. "And he sent you a message. He said to go and tell James that 'I am up here at Nora's with a pistol, a jug of whiskey and his wife, all in bed with me, and what is he going to do about it?'" James, he says, "Well, I guess I'll eat my supper first and then I'll go see about it." So James finished his supper and went up to Nora's. When he got up there he found the facts as they had been represented. So by the time he got there, the jug was empty. So he just pitched it out the window, and he pitched the pistol out the window. He got Myrtle by the hair and kicked her out the door and picked up the axe that was lying beside the door and turned around. He was fixin' to hit Elbert on the head, but he squirmed around and flopped onto the floor so he hit him in the leg. Broke his leg.

James was tried and convicted. Since the jury was in sympathy with him, he was placed on work release. His life continued much as it had before except he spent his nights at Craggy Prison. One night he failed to return. He was gone for two months before he was found in Florida. When asked for his side of the story, according to Judge Styles,

James said, "Well, what happened was," he said, "I was cuttin' wood when the mule broke loose from where I'd tied him and," he says, "I just started tracking it and following it to catch it and, you know, that mule walked clear across Georgia into Florida before I caught up with it."

One of the most interesting stories concerning honor came from Mr. Herbert Hyde, an attorney in Asheville. Mr. Hyde is an extremely knowledgeable man, well respected in his field. He served in the North Carolina House of Representatives where he was very popular because of his natural story-telling style that flavored his speeches in the House.

The following is one of his favorite stories:

Aunt Vice [pronounced Vi-cey] married Uncle Quil Rose.... He is reputed to have killed two revenuers. They don't know that, they just went into the country, Eagle Creek, and never came out, so they just assume that something happened. He made moonshine all his life in his backyard. He had a still firmly fixed in the ground, the whole thing. They didn't arrest him until he was up in his eighties. Took them that long to get him.

I had a cousin that went bad. My dad's cousin named Charlie Brandon. He joined the Federal Government, Revenuers, became an officer. And he decided he would go arrest Uncle Quil Rose up on Eagle Creek. And he went to Proctor at the mouth of Hazel Creek. And there was a trail that led over to Eagle Creek, a horse trail. So he rode his horse over there. He had his pistol and Uncle Quil was sitting on the porch when he got there. He was 82 at the time, a tall, thin fellow. His still was out in the backyard. Anyone could see it. Charlie went and asked him about the still. Yes, he had one. Well, he wasn't supposed to do that. This was prohibition years.... At any rate, Uncle Quill said, Well, he reckoned if he had to take him, he would meet him the next day down in Proctor and take the train to Bryson City. And Charlie says, "No, you've got to go tonight." "Well, son, I can't go tonight." "Well, you've got to go."

Well, that just led up to it, one thing led to more, and Charlie tried to take him, pulled his pistol. Old man Quil took it away from him, hit him over the head with the trigger guard, and broke it. Knocked him cold. Charlie was a big guy. Picked

him up and carried him to his horse, laid him over the saddle, tied his hands and feet underneath. Tied the reins up over the saddle horn. Turned the horse around and sent him down the trail. Only had one way to go. Charlie got over to Proctor about 2:00 the next morning with the darndest headache you've ever seen and embarrassed about it. And they untied him, and he was going back and get Uncle Quil right then. They said, "No, son, you better not go tonight. You'll get killed." So the next morning he got up early. He had to go by the depot on his way and there sat Uncle Quil. And he said, "Son, I told you I'd be here this morning." And he was ready to go.

In addition to a strong code of honor, the mountain people I grew up among have a great love and respect for the beautiful country that surrounds them. They adapt themselves to the land rather than trying to conform it to their needs. Only when absolutely necessary will they allow the mountains to be cut away to suit men's needs. Even when the need has been proven, there remains a sadness at the defacement of natural beauty.

About the same time the County Court House and City Hall were built in Asheville, a tunnel was cut through the mountain east of the city to make access easier. There was strong opposition to defacing God's creation. As Judge Styles told me:

The tunnel through the mountain was considered highly extravagant, half a million dollars. And John Cathy was mayor at this time. The newspaper had an editorial that referred to Cathy as a "mental capon" and said it was sheer folly to dig a hole through a mountain when they had a perfectly good road across the top.

Apparently the feelings concerning cutting into the mountains have not changed in the last fifty years. Recently a bypass was built around Asheville, necessitating a large slice of the mountain to be cut away to accommodate the four-lane road. There was tremendous opposition to destroying a mountain God had made "when there was a perfectly good tunnel through the mountain."

Not only do the people of this area resist changing the face of the land, but they also revere the wildlife that abounds in this area. My father told me a story on himself as a young man. One day he had gone hiking up a mountain near his home. When he reached the top, he disturbed a "running black snake." He assures me this variety of black snake can rise up on its tail until it is as tall as a man. He said that snake chased him all the way down the mountain. When he reached the bottom, he saw a large stick which he quickly picked up and chased that snake all the way back up the mountain. The story ends there. His pride was restored by chasing the snake back up the mountain. It was unnecessary to kill the snake. In fact, he never killed a black snake, or any other animal, unless it was absolutely necessary. "Black snakes keep the poisonous ones away," according to local belief.

There is often a tendency among mountain people to personify nature and give it special powers. Mr. Hyde told me the following story from

his childhood. Even though it involves a trick played upon him by his uncle, it shows the willingness to believe in magical powers of nature.

My uncle Clyde once told me that when I was hoeing corn that when you went to lunch, stick your hoe up in the ground and put some dirt on it so the handle would stand up. Then it would get up and hoe the corn while you were gone. What he would do was slip back early, and hoe a few extra hills. And I believed it for years.

My mother always planted the majority of her garden on Good Friday because she had always been told that anything planted on Good Friday would grow. She always had the most fruitful garden in the area and the most beautiful flowers. She also believed that you must give some of your bounty away in order to have a good harvest.

The people of this mountainous area are relatively calm and unemotional, at least on the surface. They conserve their strength for the struggle to survive in what is sometimes a hostile environment. I find much to admire in their calm acceptance of whatever comes their way. Mr. Hyde told me a delightful story that reminds me of the modern "surpriser suprised" legends of more urban societies. The difference lies in the way the subject of the story handles the surprise. In the more modern stories, the subjects have difficulty in dealing with their humiliation, and the stories often end in tragedy. In this story, Uncle Clyde handles the situation philosophically and with true mountain calm.

This story is told on Uncle Clyde. Don't know if it is true or not. He lived on the head of Nolan Creek, way...fourteen miles from Bryson City. Had one little wagon and a mare he called Maude. His wife was named Bessie, his second wife. And he grew potatoes, corn, and a little tobacco and things you could get a little cash for in town, sold it, and decided he needed a new suit of clothes. What he had was tattered. So he bought him a suit—hat, suit, shoes, the whole bit, shirt. It was in October, Indian Summer, rather warm. And he just put it all in a box and put it under his wagon seat. Got in his wagon and drove towards home. He got down to Nolan Creek, and, of course, houses were a long distance apart. He had to cross a ford and the old mare wanted to drink, so he stopped and she began to drink. He thought, "Why, it's warm. I can just take a bath, change clothes, go home, and surprise Bessie." So he took off his old hat and sailed it down the creek. Nolan Creek is a bold, rushing stream. The hat sailed away down the water. Same thing with his shirt, trousers, even threw his boots away. Got off, naked as a jay-bird. Took a bath. Got back on the wagon, looked for his clothes. Someone had stolen that box out from under the seat. Didn't have a stitch. So he stood there a minute and he said, "Well, git up, Maude. We'll just go home and surprise Bessie anyhow."

This same "Uncle Clyde" was responsible for providing a surprise for a number of his neighbors during a church ceremony.

We had a preacher, Uncle Lige Low.... He was favorite of mine. A tall, uneducated, just grew up as a preacher. But a good man.... We attended then the Rock Creek Baptist Church. It was a hardshell, fundamentalist, non-missionary, I mean all the

way back. My granddaddy was a deacon and Uncle Lige was the preacher. He came about once a month to give a sermon. Wasn't paid. Took up a little collection occasionally. But every fall we would have communion. Uncle Lige's nephew, Tom Lowe, had a little vineyard, grew grapes, and made a little wine out of it. We drank a glass of wine. I looked forward to it. It was important to me. I liked that wine. Anyway, we went one Sunday evening. It was time and Uncle Lige said, "Tom, it's time to take communion. Have you brought the wine?" Tom said, "Uncle Lige, my grapes didn't reap this year. I ain't got no wine." Uncle Lige didn't hardly know what to do. Uncle Clyde, he lived near the church. He didn't go often, but he had slipped in and was sitting in the back row. He knew Lige and he said, "Lige, I've got some wine." Lige said, "Well, Clyde, go get it." So he went out. He didn't tell us it was made out of green persimmons. Now have you ever tasted green persimmons? He came back with half of a bushel of wine, and they passed it around with a little dipper. We all took a dipper of it. Uncle Lige first. And I noticed his mouth was kinda moving around on him. By the time we all got through and were looking up expectantly, his mouth was around under his ears, and he said, "Well now's the time to sing a hymn, but I think we had all just better whistle a tune and go home."

Most folks think that isn't so, but it is. I was there.

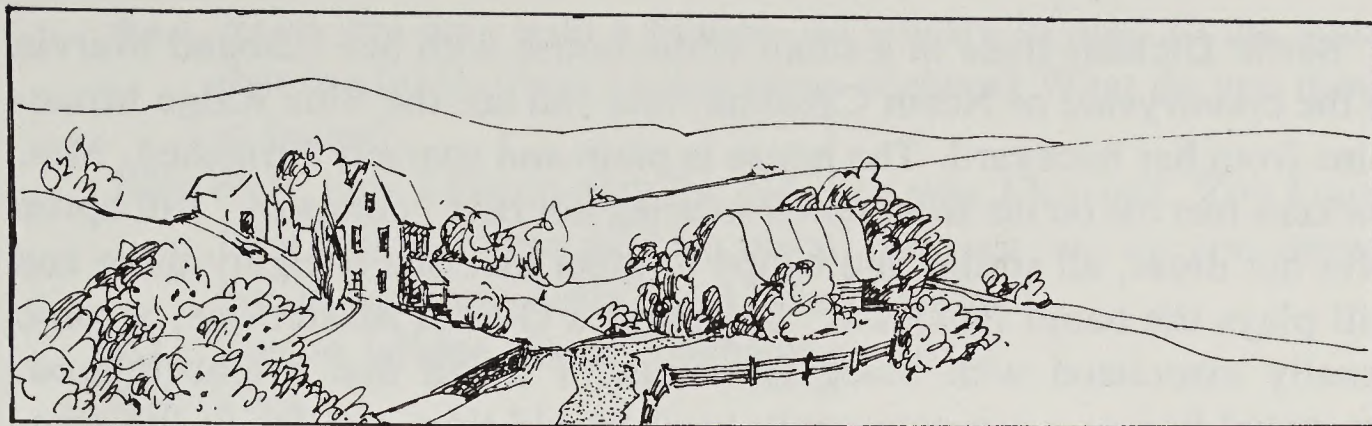
Unfortunately, not all the stories I was told were as humorous as the preceding one. The following story was told by my Aunt Hattie. I had heard versions of it all my life. The story concerns a cousin of my aunt and my grandmother. She lost her baby in a tragic way during the 1916 flood.

Over in Liberty Section, where we used to live, it got so bad in the night that they decided they would leave the house and go to the barn, and as they went, there was a slide that come off the hill someway and washed right down on them and took the old man, an uncle that was living with them, and Guivy, who was my cousin, who had the baby. She had just picked it up and wrapped a quilt around it to carry it. And she, I don't know if she fell or not, but it washed so hard against her that she dropped the baby. She reached for it and got it real quick. And she never knew she didn't have the baby until a little bit later she realized that she just had the wet quilt. That barn that they went to was washed out. Had they stayed in their house, they would have been all right.

This was a tragedy difficult to overcome, but Guivy and her family survived, rebuilt, and continued to live in the mountains. These strong, resilient people are sustained by the mountains that have survived millions of years and unnumbered storms. Their faith is unshakable and as deep as the mountains are high. They live by the words of the first verse of Psalm 121: "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."

NOTES

1. For a discussion of "the identification of Appalachia with Nature" and the personifying of nature and the region in individual character, see Allen Batteau, "The Sacrifice of Nature: A Study in the Social Production of Consciousness," in Patricia D. Beaver and Burton L. Purrington, eds., *Cultural Adaptations to Mountain Environments*, Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings 17 (Athens: U. of Georgia P., 1984), pp. 95-97.



An Interview with Mrs. Bertie Dickens, Old-Time Banjo Player

by Karen Linn

On 26 July, 1985 I interviewed Mrs. Bertie Dickens, an old-time banjo player who lives over the border from Galax, Virginia, in Ennice, North Carolina.¹ The North Carolina Folklore Society presented her with a Brown-Hudson Folklore Award in 1985. The interview explored her conservative musical tradition: the learning process establishing that tradition, the aesthetic values perpetuating it, and the performance contexts that allowed its expression.

Mrs. Dickens plays in the clawhammer style associated with old-time music. Clawhammer technique involves a down-picking motion, striking the string with the fingernail, rather than the up-picking technique that is traditional in European string playing. Mrs. Dickens uses a two-finger up-picking technique for slow tunes, but never uses the three finger bluegrass style. Her repertory consists of the tunes that she has been playing for many years; she has little interest in learning new tunes. She lacks the emotional attachment to tunes that have not already been a part of her life.

While commercial country music, bluegrass, and the folk revival have increasingly affected southeastern instrumental music, Mrs. Dickens has remained remarkably rooted in her personal musical inheritance. She began playing the banjo around 1908, learning from family members. Her family provided her with a rich tradition, an at-home "performance" context, and musical partners for performance in the community. She apparently felt no need to search for innovation, adopt commercial techniques, or win contests.² Mrs. Dickens's devotion to her old tunes and old ways must be viewed as an individual statement of conservative values in the face of musical change.

Bertie Dickens lives in a small white house with her husband Marvin in the countryside of North Carolina. She can see the Blue Ridge Mountains from her backyard. The house is plain and sparsely furnished. Mrs. Dickens met me on the front porch wearing her best "company" full-apron over her dress, all smiles and happy to greet me. She is eighty-three and still plays the banjo flawlessly. She plays a Gibson Mastertone, a banjo usually associated with bluegrass music. I found that bright-timbred, resonated banjos were commonly used by old-time players in the area. During the interview, she played "Arkansas Traveler," "County Jail" (sometimes called "Fall on My Knees"), "Cripple Creek," "Curtains at Night" (two-finger-picking style), "Down the Road" (the first tune she learned), "Georgia Buck," "John Hardy," "John Henry" (two-finger-picking style), "Johnson Boys," "Old 97" (two-finger-picking style), "Old Sally Ann," and "Soldier's Joy."

Karen Linn: How old were you when you started to learn how to play ?

Bertie Dickens: How old was I?

KL: Yeah

BD: [laughs] Lord have mercy, I couldn't even hold a banjo in my lap, I was so little.

KL: Did people in your family play?

BD: Yeah, my older brothers wouldn't let us young ones mess with their music. We'd set in the door and watch for 'em, and I'd have to lay my banjo over on the floor and pick away up here.

KL: Up on the neck. So your brothers played the banjo, did they you how to play?

BD: No. They never showed us nothing. I reckon they thought we was makin' a very good start on it.

KL: Did members of your family play other things besides the banjo?

BD: Just the banjo and fiddle, every one of 'em except one.

KL: How many children were there in the family?

BD: Eight.

KL: Eight kids! Did you have just one banjo in the family and you all had to fight for it?

BD: No, we had two fiddles and two banjos. Well, you know my older brothers, they'd go to these dances you know and some of them wouldn't have an instrument and that's how come two banjos.

KL: Was it a homemade banjo?

BD: Yeah.

KL: Did it have frets on it?

BD: Yeah...and my Daddy was a real fiddler.

KL: When you play with a fiddler, do you try to play all the notes that the fiddle plays or just some of them? What do you think is better?

BD: Well, now I like to play the old-time way I learned. You know they learned these modern tunes, they cut 'em up you know, put in different notes from what I learned.

KL: You're talking about clawhammer style?

BD: Yeah.

KL: What do they do? They don't put in as many notes, or...

BD: Well they put in extra notes, most of them does, or I never learned it you see.

Marvin: Well, what she does, she plays the old-time music and goes back as far as she can because she's got a brother that's older than she is, he's a hundred years old.

BD: He's a hundred and two.

KL: And is he still playing?

BD: No, he's go to where he can't use his arms.

KL: That's too bad. So did you used to play with him?

BD: I never did it with him. I had two more brothers, three more that I played with. Joel was next to Hugh, he played the fiddle. And Ciel, my youngest brother, he played the fiddle, and George, he could do both, he played the fiddle or picked the banjo...all of them dead. Oh, they could pick tunes. And Alice, the only sister I have living, she played the banjo. But she flat-footed most. And I mean she could step it off.

KL: So when you first started playing, did you play at dances, or at corn shuckings or...?

BD: Well, pretty shortly after me and Ciel started, we did.

KL: You were very young then when you started playing out.

BD: Yeah.

KL: What did you play?

BD: Just these old tunes.

KL: What kind of occasions were they?

BD: Mostly corn shuckings, and sometimes they'd have them quilting parties, they called it you know, and they would dance a few reels. There would be enough men there that they could run reels. They don't have them good times like that no more. No get togethers hardly. And they'd have them old bean hullings. They'd ask us out, you know to come and help hull beans and then we could frolick after we got them beans hulled. Take our music.

KL: So what kind of group did you have when you'd go play. Did you play with your brother?

BD: Yeah.

KL: And did you have a guitar player too?

BD: No, wasn't no guitars. Just the fiddle and the banjo.

KL: You always just played fiddle and banjo, all the way through?

BD: All the way through.

KL: Did you ever play just a straight dance, it wasn't anything else besides a dance?

BD: Well, no, I don't know as I ever did.

KL: So do you still go out and play?

BD: Yeah, me and Andy [Cahan] and Alice [Gerrard] plays.

KL: You play little get togethers?

BD: Yeah, on Saturday nights.

KL: In people's homes, mostly?

BD: Yeah. They're wantin' us back above here tomorrow night.

KL: What for?

BD: Just a family's house. And they enjoy it.

KL: And they are going to have some friends over?

BD: Oh yeah, the house will be full. They'll get us and flatfoot. They hardly ever have them regular dances, you know, what I call them. They just flatfoot.

KL: When you first started playing, you were playing clawhammer, right?

BD: Yeah.

KL: Where did you learn to start picking like that? Doing that up-picking?

BD: Well, take them slow tunes you know, I pick up. A slow tune, pick like that, it brings out the sound better than it does to give it that rake all the time, what I call it.

KL: Say you couldn't have this banjo, but you needed a banjo to play old-time music, what would you look for? What kind of banjo would you want if you couldn't have this Gibson?

BD: Well, I wouldn't know. You know they make different makes of them. And I think they are even good. Gibson, that sells for the name I think.

KL: You would want one with a resonator?

BD: Well, you know I like them with a back to 'em. I believe it pulls the sound more out, bring that sound out this way.

KL: All the tunes you play, do you ever pick up any new tunes?

BD: Well, no. All of them's old ones.

KL: Do you ever make up any tunes?

BD: No.

KL: And your brothers and sisters, did they ever make up tunes?

KL: They played the old tunes.

KL: There's so many of them, it would keep you busy forever.

BD: Oh yeah. My goodness if you were to start to play 'em all, you'd play all day or all night. The fiddler I play with, he lives in Wilkesboro, we hardly ever get together, 'cause that's a long ways for him to drive. But he'll come. He likes music. Now he plays them old tunes, and he plays some of the new ones. But I hardly ever play 'em with him. I don't know, I just ain't attached to 'em or something. I like the old tunes.

NOTES

1. I thank Andy Cahan for introducing me to Bertie Dickens.
2. Mrs. Dickens played several times at the nearby Galax (Virginia) Fiddler's Convention, but quit going because she was not fond of playing in contests.



Book Reviews

Turners and Burners: The Folk Potters of North Carolina. By Charles G. Zug III. Pp. xxii + 450, preface, map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, indices. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986. \$39.95.

Reviewed by John Burrison.

In 1917, handicrafts aficionados Jacques and Juliana Busbee of Raleigh visited the Piedmont North Carolina pottery center of Seagrove searching for old potters and wares. This quest led to their establishing the Jugtown Pottery in 1922 and marked the beginning of serious public interest in North Carolina's pottery heritage. In the intervening seventy years recognition of this heritage has steadily grown, and this long-awaited survey of traditional potters and their wares should delight the hordes of devoted collectors both within and outside the state.

The collectors are justified in their devotion, for few states can compare with North Carolina in the diversity and vitality of its ceramic traditions. As "Terry" Zug (known to many *NCFJ* readers as a folklorist at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) demonstrates in Part One of his book, "History," North Carolina is a ceramic "border state" which received influences from the Upper South and Northeast as well as the Deep South. The earliest tradition to take root was that of the Moravians in present-day Forsyth County who, beginning in 1756, produced lead-glazed earthenwares sometimes elaborately decorated with colored slips (liquid clays) in the Central European fashion. Shortly thereafter, potters of mainly English background began to settle around Seagrove (Randolph and Moore counties), bringing with them a less decorative approach to earthenware and, probably in the 1830's, beginning to specialize in salt-glazed stoneware similar to that of more northerly states but usually lacking the cobalt-blue decoration typically applied there. At about the same time, Pennsylvania-German earthenware potters who had established themselves further west

along the junction of Catawba and Lincoln counties shifted to the production of stoneware with a distinctly Southern alkaline (woodash-based) glaze. Smaller centers emerged along with isolated potters, most continuing to locate in the Piedmont where good clay and the population were concentrated. Professor Zug has documented over 500 traditional potters for North Carolina, making it the most intensive state in the region (and possibly the country) for the production of folk pottery. By 1900 the Moravian tradition had fizzled out, but old-time folk potter Burlon Craig (the author's touchstone for the living tradition) is still at work in the Catawba Valley, while potters in the Seagrove area changed some of their designs, glazes, and equipment to accommodate a tourist market.

Professor Zug tells this story with an all-too-rare combination of solid scholarship, elegant readability, and human warmth that results from the maturation of twelve years of field and archival research, training in both English and folklore, and a concern for his subject bordering on obsession. What distinguishes his approach from that of the decorative art historian is the sense of continuity for the 230-year period covered, achieved to a large degree with numerous quotations from tape-recorded interviews with those who were participants in or witnesses to the tradition. This testimony, the fruit of "driving the equivalent of several trips around the world," not only humanizes the text but provides an insider's perspective on the practical realities of making folk pottery. "I was hauling wood, grinding clay, beating those cinders, help putting the kiln of ware in, help taking one out, carrying it out to dry.... You go around a potter's shop, you had a job. You didn't lay down under a shade tree," retired Catawba Valley potter Enoch Reinhardt is quoted as saying. The book is richly illustrated with 270 black-and-white and twenty color photographs plus a map, shop and kiln diagrams, and genealogical charts; the photos (a good number of them historical) strike a nice balance among pots, potters, and their work places. The author develops the human dimension of potting mainly in Part Three, "Culture," which covers the folk potter's training (often occurring within a family setting), the economics of the craft, and the functions of the wares and their importance in rural life. Part Two, "Technology," a detailed description of the production processes from digging clay to "turning" (throwing) and "burning" (firing) the pots, will be of especial interest to practicing potters. In addition, the index of potters at the end will be useful to collectors, dealers, and members of pottery families tracing their roots.

An "instant classic," *Turners and Burners* makes an enormous contribution to the study of North Carolina folklife. It should be equally at home in an academic's library, on a living-room coffee table, or on a collector's or potter's bookshelf, and is likely to make converts of those readers not already involved in the subject. North Carolinians, rejoice! You have been well served.

Afro-American Folktales: Stories from Black Traditions in the New World. Edited by Roger D. Abrahams. New York and Canada: Pantheon Books and Random House of Canada Limited, 1985. Pp. 162, preface, introduction, appendix (sources, annotations, index of tales), bibliography. \$11.95 paper.

Reviewed by Elon Kulii.

One of the most notable items contained in this volume, welcomed by scholars and layman alike, is the "refining" and "translating" processes that have been undertaken by Abrahams. Unlike the transcription of superficiality characteristic of works by Joel Chandler Harris and Charles W. Chestnutt, Abrahams decided to "transcribe faithfully" where possible and "maintain the spirit of the storytelling" even though he attempted to avoid "the ugliest side of stereotyping." Even the trained linguist is attracted to the increased element of readability for which Professor Abrahams strives, for early folklorists (mostly literary scholars) did not use a universal written mode of phonetic and linguistic notation. Thus when the writer says, "I have employed many changes to convey better an oral style in a literate format," one can recognize the significance of this objective.

The scope of this collection is very similar to Harold Courlander's *Treasury of Afro American Folklore*, which contains panoramic samplings of tales from the Americas (North, South, and Central), the Caribbean and the West Indies. Abrahams groups his corpus of tales into seven categories, having the following headings: "Getting Things Started: How the World Got Put Together That Way"; "Minding Somebody Else's Business and Making It Your Own"; "Getting a Comeuppance: How (and How Not) to Act Stories"; "How Clever Can You Get? Tales of Trickery and Its Consequences"; "The Strong Ones and the Clever: Contests and Confrontations"; "Getting Around Old Master (Most of the Time)"; and "In the End, Nonsense."

Part one contains tales/legends that account for the origin (etiological) of numerous orders within the universe, while part two contains narratives that shed significant insight on the intriguing signifying tradition. Most notable of these are the "Signifying Monkey." (Anyone who thinks that the editor has "watered down" his corpus should read this tale of the "folk" and the *signifying* hare in the tale "Tug-of-War Between Elephant and Whale.") Parts three, four, and five respectively give moral and fabled stories, episodic adventures of the infamous trickster, and magical legends of the supernatural. A more serious note is sounded in the consciousness of the folktales of the next section. The stark nakedness of the slave experience and the conflict between the Black and the White portray actors at the best and worst. The last group of tales seemed to be a bit

unbalanced if we compare it to the other sections, but what do we expect from a section that treats the formulaically nonsensical?

This is a very good collection with excellent introductions, sources, and annotations. Many will find delight here.

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North Carolina Folklore Journal

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The *North Carolina Folklore Journal* publishes studies of North Carolina folklore and folklife, analyses of the use of folklore in literature, and articles whose rigorous methodology or innovative approach is pertinent to local folklife study. Manuscripts should conform to *The MLA Style Manual*. Quotations from oral narratives should be transcriptions of spoken texts and should be identified by teller, place, and date.



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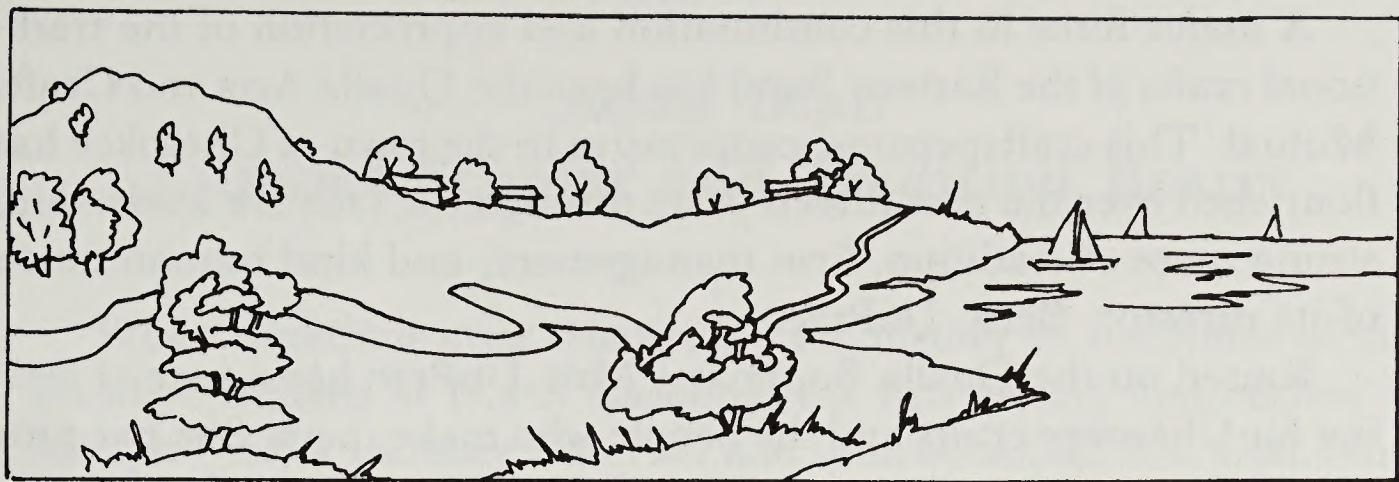
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CONTENTS

1986 Brown-Hudson Awards	71
Betty DuPree: Promoter of Traditional Cherokee Arts, <i>Thomas McGowan</i>	71
Adolph Dial: Lumbee Scholar and Tradition Bearer, <i>Betty Oxendine</i>	73
Literacy and Alienation in the Novels of Zora Neale Hurston, <i>Ingrid K. Towey</i>	75
Social Structure and the Irish and American Jack Tales, <i>Julie Henigan</i>	87
Illustrations, <i>Norma Farthing Murphy</i>	
Cover: A Moravian brass band plays at Easter sunrise services, Old Salem, 1985. Photograph by Thomas McGowan.	

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The 1986 Brown-Hudson Folklore Awards

The Brown-Hudson Folklore Award was established in 1970 to honor two distinguished folklorists and members of the North Carolina Folklore Society, the late Frank C. Brown and Arthur Palmer Hudson. Both had served as the Society's Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Brown from 1913 to 1944 and Dr. Hudson from 1945 to 1966. Dr. Hudson was also founder and editor of *North Carolina Folklore*, which became the *North Carolina Folklore Journal*. Our state's highest folklore recognition, the Award honors a resident or native of North Carolina who has contributed in a special way to the appreciation of regional traditions. In 1986, the Society presented Brown-Hudson Awards to Betty DuPree and Adolph Dial as part of "Celebration," a festival of Native American life on the campus of Pembroke State University.

Betty DuPree: Promoter of Traditional Cherokee Arts

Today we can wander about this quadrangle and experience the traditional arts and crafts of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee people. We can still see baskets woven of white oak splits gathered on the north side of mountain coves, their colors fixed by dyes worked from native plants. We can still use double woven baskets so tightly wound with river cane that they fulfill the legendary basketmaker's boast that you can carry water in them.

These are old crafts, originally functional or ritual in use, but the fine quality of their work and the decorativeness of their designs have made them attractive in modern times to other peoples. They are valued because they are beautiful, but also because they embody one people's traditions.

A major force in this continuation and appreciation of the traditional crafts of the Eastern Band has been the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual. This craftspersons' cooperative in the town of Cherokee has flourished over the past fifteen years through the creative leadership, strong sense of tradition, firm management, and kind human touch of its director, Betty DuPree.

Raised on the Qualla Boundary, Mrs. DuPree has a special feeling for Cherokee crafts and the people who make them. She has promoted the traditionality of these crafts, encouraging makers to use the materials and methods of their mothers and fathers. While she has built the Mutual's membership to over three hundred craftspeople, she still has maintained high standards of craftsmanship for admission. Through experiences living in Arizona and New Mexico, she has introduced other crafts traditions to her own people and enhanced the artistic dialogue among Native Americans both east and west.

Mrs. DuPree has modernized the business operations of the Mutual, but in all her work, she has kept a sense of people's craft. Her friend and neighbor Molly Blankenship remarked to me that Betty's best quality is that she really works at maintaining the human element in Cherokee crafts especially among the older people. The North Carolina Folklore Society too treasures this linking of the "human element" with formal elements of superior craft esthetic through Betty DuPree's accomplishments.

Mrs. DuPree has created a special market for the crafts traditions of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee. Under her directorship, the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual provides the best of human markets, a place where makers may bring fine work expressing their senses of self and of people, and where the work is presented so others can understand and appreciate its special excellence and communal expression.

Betty DuPree has in the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual woven her own basket, a useful object decorated with the values of her people and appreciated by other peoples. It is with considerable pride, appreciation, and satisfaction that the North Carolina Folklore Society presents its 1986 Brown-Hudson Folklore Award to Mrs. Betty DuPree of Cherokee.

—Thomas McGowan
Appalachian State University

Adolf Dial: Lumbee Scholar and Tradition Bearer

When questions arise concerning the history or traditions of the Lumbee Indians of North Carolina, the first person approached is Adolph Dial, a Lumbee historian and humanitarian. Mr. Dial, who is chairman of the American Indian Studies Department at Pembroke State University, has long been recognized, locally and nationally, for his knowledge of and contributions to the preservation and perpetuation of the oral and written history and folk traditions of the Lumbee people.

One of his major contributions to the Lumbee community was his involvement in the creation and organization of the Lumbee Regional Development Association (LRDA), a tribal agency engaged in developing the economic, educational, and artistic potential of the Indian community. Through many of the programs administered by LRDA, various means of recording and supporting the oral and artistic traditions of the Lumbee people were made possible. One such program was the oral history project in which a large number of Lumbee elders, through recorded interviews, were able to relate their own stories of the past as well as the stories passed on to them. These tapes provide an invaluable resource for researchers who are interested in the history and folkways of the Lumbee people. The agency, under the leadership of Mr. Dial as chairman of the board of directors, was also instrumental in the development of a Lumbee language project coordinated with the University of Florida designed to study the dialect of the Lumbee people. Also implemented was a pre-school program for Lumbee children through which they could not only obtain the basic preparation for entering school, but at the same time learn of their own heritage and culture, thus reinforcing their tribal identity.

Another community project to which Mr. Dial gave much of his time and support was the outdoor drama *Strike at the Wind*. He was the first chairman of the board of directors for the drama and has witnessed not only its survival, but also its success despite many obstacles encountered since the opening season twelve years ago. *Strike at the Wind* presents an important part of Lumbee history, the story of Henry Berry Lowrie, the Lumbee outlaw, and the plight of the Lumbee during the 1800s, in a very informative but entertaining

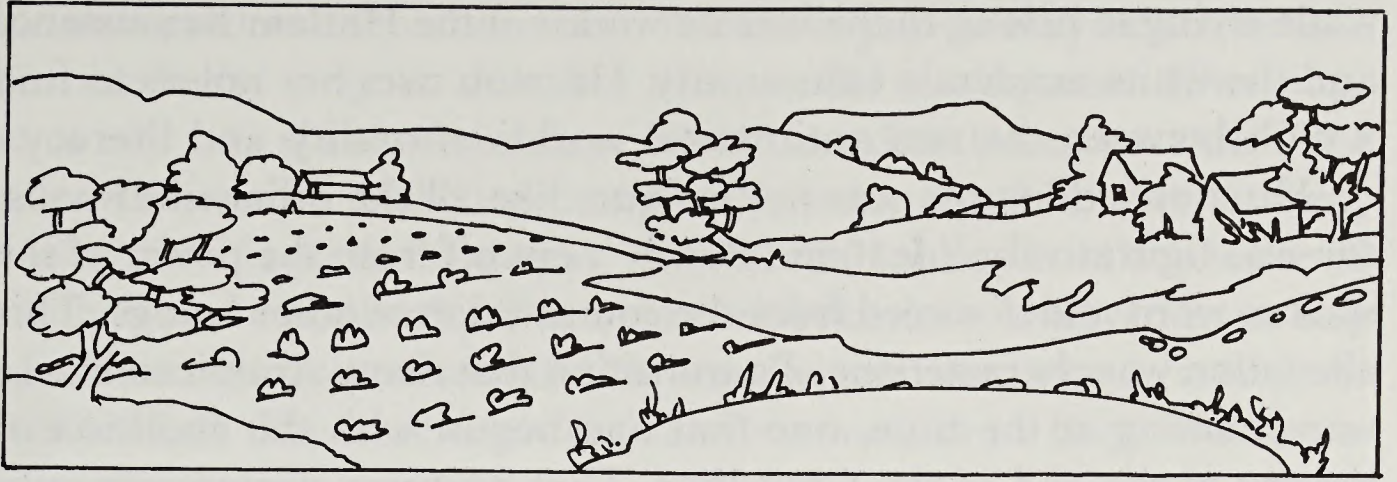
fashion. Significant to the production of this drama was that it involved local Indian people in all aspects, from promotion to technical jobs to stage performance.

For many years, the Lumbee people have been researched, studied, and restudied; however, not until the publication of *The Only Land I Know*, has the Lumbee story been told from the Lumbee perspective. This tribal history, co-authored by Mr. Dial, combines written tradition with oral history in telling the story of the Lumbee people. Since its publication, it has become one of the definitive documents on the Lumbee.

Realizing the need to preserve the history of the Lumbee, Mr. Dial was also the organizer of the Department of American Indian Studies at Pembroke State University, which is one of two departments of American Indian Studies east of the Mississippi. This department has been particularly important in giving Lumbee students as well as non-Indian students a greater understanding of the tribal history and the contributions made by the Lumbee people to the development and growth of the area.

Mr. Dial has many significant achievements to his credit; however, perhaps the most significant are his persistence and insistence to make Lumbee people aware of themselves and their rich heritage and to inform and educate others about the history and cultural traditions of his tribe. Because of the knowledge he has gained and his willingness to share this knowledge and give of himself to helping preserve the history and culture of the Lumbee people, Adolph Dial is most deserving of this Brown-Hudson Folklore Award bestowed upon him by the North Carolina Folklore Society.

—Betty Oxendine
University of Minnesota



1986 W. Amos Abrams Prize

Literacy and Alienation in the Novels of Zora Neale Hurston

By Ingrid K. Towey

When God made The Man, he made him out of stuff that sung all the time and glittered all over. Then after that some angels got jealous and chopped him into millions of pieces, but still he glittered and hummed. So they beat him down to nothing but sparks but each little spark had a shine and a song. So they covered each one over with mud. And the lonesomeness in the sparks make them hunt for one another, but the mud is deaf and dumb. Like all the other tumbling mud-balls, Janie had tried to show her shine.

—Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*¹

In some sense, all the characters Zora Neale Hurston creates in her fiction are tumbling mud-balls desperately trying to shine and reach out to one another in their lonesomeness: they are all alienated from themselves and one another. In both *Jonah's Gourd Vine* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, for example, Hurston's protagonists, John and Janie, spend the novels searching for wholeness and a way to show their shine, even though the surrounding society tries to drag them down into the slime. Ultimately, their search is a reflection of Hurston's inner search for completeness: these novels are her exploration of her psyche in an attempt to understand and integrate the conflicting parts of her life. Alienated from the oral folk environment of her childhood

while trying to belong to the literate worlds of the Harlem Renaissance and the white academic community, Hurston uses her novels to find a path between the two antithetical worlds of orality and literacy.

Hurston's dilemma was not unique; like all the other mud-balls, she was figuratively "deaf and dumb": cut off from the power of the spoken word and divorced from the communion of other beings. This alienation was characteristic of a transition that many American blacks were making at the time, one that had begun with the abolition of slavery at the end of the Civil War. That post-war period was only the beginning of a long period of change as blacks began to attempt to assimilate into the dominant, white culture. With the end of slavery, blacks not only had to learn to act like free men and women, but also had to overcome the dominant culture's preconceptions of their inferiority. More importantly, to compete economically and intellectually, former slaves had to make the transition from an oral, communal folk culture to a literate, individualistic one, and American blacks were still in the throes of this transition during Hurston's lifetime.

American Negroes originally came from predominantly oral African communities; even after they became slaves in the United States, they were usually not allowed to learn to read and write; instead, they cultivated their own oral traditions in English.² This practice helped create a sense of unity among blacks in spite of the diversity of their original languages and origins, and, in fact, helped them face the uncertainty of life as slaves with some sense of identity and purpose.

In general, predominantly oral cultures and communities tend to produce people who have a deep sense of their personal identity. In a society without writing, every word and every idea comes from the mouth of a specific person and can be identified with him or her; in consequence, language and community life in these cultures are "conspicuously integrative."³ Unlike white American society, oral communities cannot conceive that ideas might exist in a vacuum that separates "knower and known," actor from actions.⁴ Literacy divides words from speakers and authority from authors. The result is increasing isolation, abstraction, independence of thought, and scorn for repetition and formula. All of these are ruinous for an oral community, where knowledge and identity evaporate unless they are spoken aloud and often, in easily remembered formulas. In short, literacy leads to alienation and cleavage.⁵ An adult forced to undergo the transition from orality to literacy feels as if he or she is being ripped in half—as if some fundamental part of his or her identity can be wrested away

and analyzed as a separate entity. A literate person may better be able to universalize or generalize, but as a parallel consequence of writing, he or she has also lost much of his or her direct contact with "the human lifeworld" of the interactive oral community.⁶ In essence, then, freeing the blacks from slavery also "freed" them from the sense of selfhood and community that stemmed from their oral traditions and was their only asset. In addition, freed slaves were put in a curious double bind: they were encouraged to become literate in order to compete economically, yet, at one and the same time, frightened whites tried to intimidate the freed men and women into an attitude of passivity.

Predictably, as more and more blacks became literate, many of them suffered a soul-breaking alienation from the better part of their heritage. Not only was their original transition from orality to literacy forced and abrupt, rather than a natural evolution of their culture, but also their alienation was intensified by their separation from both their life as slaves and their homeland in Africa. They were forced to assimilate to survive, yet most whites refused to recognize their rights as either people or U.S. citizens. In addition, many literate and ambitious black writers and professionals were ostracized by other blacks for denying their past and entering the cultural mainstream. For all of these reasons and more, desolation and loss of personal identity are common themes in much of black literature.

The work of Zora Neale Hurston is no exception; her novels deal with alienation, impotence, and repression, but, unlike other writers of the Harlem Renaissance, she uses her writing to find a resolution to the tension between her literate and oral halves. The main characters of *Jonah's Gourd Vine* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* are alienated from themselves and each other, but Hurston tries to integrate both John, the protagonist of *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, and Janie, the protagonist of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, into the surrounding community before the novels end. Because these novels are autobiographical, to some extent Janie and John are projections of Hurston, and their stories explore the conflicts Hurston encountered as a writer.

In fact, much of her life can be seen as a struggle between her folk past and her literate present. She wanted to preserve and glorify the oral traditions of her folk roots, but she had become irrevocably separated from those traditions. She could no longer participate in the folk aesthetic comfortably as one of the community without standing back and observing her own actions through "the spy-glass of Anthropology."⁷ Moreover, her first collecting experience in 1927 failed

because Hurston had lost all contact with the folk; she went around asking rural blacks in, what she termed, “carefully accented Barnardese, ‘Pardon me, but do you know any folk-tales or folk-songs?’ ” and only succeeded in confusing and intimidating her potential informants.⁸ She had lost the unconscious creativity of the folk, and she later tried in her novels, short stories, and collections of folklore to recreate self-consciously their spontaneous art and joy in life.⁹ Hurston’s decision to have a career further isolated her from the traditional roles that women normally occupied at the time, whether in the white or black community. Instead of being content to listen to the men tell stories on the porch, Hurston wanted to be able to tell stories herself and, more importantly, to be able to collect and publish them. Her insistence on a career and her fierce independence were the major factors that broke up both of her marriages and ended at least one affair.¹⁰

While studying anthropology at Barnard and living in New York City, Hurston was tainted by attitudes that would further alienate her from her folk past:

She was confronted ... with the implicit suggestion that although black folklore might be a valuable expression for unlettered people, it was still of low order. Cultures are always evaluated ethnocentrically, and different cultural practices are assumed to be inferior simply because of their difference. The black critic Houston Baker has pointed out that “culture, like race, is little more than a superstition for most whites”; the idea that culture simply stands for a “whole way of life, and that there might be a multitude of wholes never occurs to most Americans.”¹¹

In short, Hurston was constantly confronted by a belief that the oral folk experience was somehow inferior to the literate, individualistic environment she found in college, yet she refused to be swayed by the prejudice around her. In an attempt to articulate the folk experiences in her life in the face of white intolerance, she overcompensated and eventually became “more folksy than the folk,” as Langston Hughes and others accused her of being.¹² She was conspicuously full of “side-splitting anecdotes, humorous tales, and tragicomic stories remembered out of her life in the South.”¹³

Many black intellectuals were also disturbed by Hurston’s writing in dialect. Wishing to leave their own illiterate past behind, they resented having Hurston thrust it upon them. Other critics, including Richard Wright and Sterling Brown, have accused Hurston of perpetuating stereotypes in her novels and collections and ignoring the presence of racial tensions. But Hurston was more interested in

sensitively portraying black people than in bemoaning white racism.¹⁴ Her artistic sincerity isolated her from other black writers of the time, some of whom refused to take her work seriously. Admittedly, Hurston avoided writing about the race problem partly because of publisher's restrictions as well as personal aesthetics, but she insisted "that black culture ... could be discussed without constant reference to white oppression."¹⁵

Her relationship with her white patron, Mrs. Rufus Osgood Mason, could only have aggravated her feelings of alienation and loss of identity. "Mrs. Mason thought of Zora as an unspoiled child of nature," in spite of Hurston's education and intelligence. Mason patronized black artists in order to come in contact with the "primitive" emotions of her charges and insisted on hearing all the details of Hurston's collecting among the "aboriginal ... southern black folk."¹⁶ In short, Mason was pushing Hurston back into the oral culture of her childhood to look for the spontaneity missing from white life, although Hurston recognized that she was no longer a member of the folk community. The relationship must have irked her at times, but in order to collect folklore and establish an academic reputation, Hurston was willing to play Mason's game. Moreover, because of the terms of her contract with Mason, Hurston was not allowed to publish the material she had collected without prior approval from Mason; these restrictions on publishing extended to Hurston's fiction as well as her collecting.¹⁷ Although Hurston was an adult, Mason insisted on treating her as an irresponsible child who could not be trusted to make decisions. This sort of treatment drove Hurston further from white society, which was already unattractive because it lacked the vitality she associated with blackness.¹⁸

Ultimately, Hurston could never completely belong in the social groups to which she aspired. Her skin color separated her from her white patrons and professors, and her roots in rural Florida divided her from educated urban blacks, yet the education and sophistication that she had attained in college divorced her from her past orality. She was no longer a member of the folk and could not return to her past life, but none of the roles she had learned to play in her new life satisfied her. As an anthropologist, she lacked the objectivity to be as great a collector and scholar as Franz Boas, her mentor. As a writer, she refused to deal with the racial discrimination that concerned many blacks, and she even wrote one novel with white protagonists. As a student, she only attended those classes that interested her and ignored everything else. And ultimately, as a folklorist, she had to bow

down to the demands of a woman who held the purse strings and who forced Hurston to play the primitive. Only in her novels could Hurston return to the unspoiled past of her folk experience, and she used her work to reaffirm the richness of oral folk traditions. By writing literature about the oral poetry that had formed a matrix for her childhood, Hurston could once again have access to a past that she had lost. Literacy had isolated her, and only by learning to write in an oral style and vicariously rejoining the folk through the characters in her novels could Hurston form a stable identity.

In *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, for example, Hurston created a novel deeply concerned with the aesthetics of an oral art form, folk preaching. In this book, Hurston is trying to come to terms with her past orality, which was symbolized by her father, a folk preacher, who could be termed ignorant by Barnard standards. But Hurston is not content with the stereotypical preachers found in Afro-American jokes and tales. Instead, she "trie[s] to present a Negro preacher who is neither funny nor an imitation Puritan ram-rod in pants. Just the human being and poet that he must be to succeed in a Negro pulpit."¹⁹ By learning to deal with the protagonist John, Hurston must come to terms with her own father, whom she never understood and whose world was dying.²⁰ This need to flesh out stereotypical characters is typical of the changed attitudes that literacy entails: a formulaic picture of a preacher is no longer satisfying by itself.²¹

Interestingly, by trying to remain true to the oral art forms of rural blacks, Hurston has almost succeeded in creating an "oral" novel. To have been able to write an oral novel would have been a complete integration of Hurston's past and present, but such a synthesis is ultimately impossible. The very act of writing precludes it. However, Hurston's efforts do come awfully close to her mark. For example, the work is dominated by oral rhythms and consists mostly of dialogue. In addition, Hurston has carefully reproduced the many nuances of black dialect. One critic remarked, "Unlike the dialect in most novels about the American Negro, this does not seem to be merely the speech of white men with the spelling distorted."²² Unfortunately, she has sometimes rendered it "with such phonetic faithfulness that some of the real poetry embodied in black speech either is obscured or goes unexploited."²³ Her use of folklore in the novel is actually much more successful for capturing the environment of an oral community than her simulated dialect. Her incorporation of authentic sermons, children's rhymes, dances, songs, and storytelling in her stories convinces us that we are with John experiencing his oral world in all its

richness and variety. John's sermon about Jesus' wounds, for example, not only stirs the deeper emotions of his audience but also penetrates the complacency of Hurston's reader. One reviewer was so impressed with the sermon that he swore that it couldn't have been the work of one preacher.²⁴ Yet many of the sermons recorded in Bruce Rosenberg's *The Art of the Afro-American Folk Preacher* are of comparable beauty and use similar images and metaphors. The formulaic qualities characteristic of oral speech²⁵ are also evident in the children's rhymes that John and his friends use to count. The players use rhymes that are easily remembered and amusing:

Three li'l' hawses in duh stable,
One jumped out and skint his nable.
All hid? All hid? (p. 45)²⁶

Ah got up 'bout half-past fo'
Forty fo' robbers wuz 'round mah do'
Ah got up and let 'em in
Hit 'em ovah de head wid uh rollin' pin.
All hid? All hid? (pp. 46-47)

With these rhymes, Hurston magically transports her reader back to the days of childhood, a time when the literate, adult world was still distant, and, in so doing, she makes the setting more real and immediate. After all, as children, we all participate in the oral lifeworld, and our memories of it are powerful.

Hurston reinforces this sense of immediacy with her allusions to African drums and drum rhythms. For example, when John dies at the story's end, Hurston narrates:

They beat upon the O-go-doe, the ancient drum. O-go-doe, O-go-doe, O-go-doe! Their hearts turned to fire and their shinbones leaped unknowingly to the drum. Not Kata-Kumba, the drum of triumph, that speaks of great ancestors and glorious wars. Not the little drum of kid-skin, for that is to dance with joy and to call to mind birth and creation, but O-go-doe, the voice of Death—that promises nothing, that speaks with tears only, and of the past. (p. 312)

Through Hurston's descriptions of drumming, the reader can hear the sounds that an oral African might associate with death or birth and can become immersed in this psyche. In short, the reader can have access to the mind of a member of a "primitive," oral culture, for whom drums have voices and personalities. Although the people of Eatonville probably never heard an African drum, this image reminds us that the black folk experience is tied to its African past. With her emphasis on African drums, Hurston is idealizing this

African heritage so that the image is no longer recognizable to the people she's describing. Yet, their life is rhythmic, and their speech and sermons are rhythmic: the drum motif has an unconscious part in the experiences of these people and Hurston is able to articulate this role.

African drums are also an important metaphor for describing John's folk preaching. When John prays in church, "he roll[s] his African drum up to the altar, and call[s] his Congo Gods by Christian names" (p. 146). Although the other blacks that John knows "are able to tuck Africa away until another 'appropriate' time, John is not. He bases his life on the old creed; Africanisms come easily to him."²⁷ In short, John's Africanisms, and hence his orality, are deeply tied in with his identity and his success as a preacher. Although John's residual orality has led to his prestige, it has also alienated him from the townspeople; to them, John's oral skills are beautiful, but they are also dangerously unpredictable. They fear his spontaneity and lack of restraint both in church and with their women. Moreover, they envy his gift and his prestige. As Lucy warned him before she died, John possesses very few true friends: the vast majority of his "friends" want only to be associated with his status and not the man behind it. When John gives up practicing his gift because he is disgusted by the hypocrisy of his church and is sincerely hurt by his enemies' attacks, he opens himself to the attacks of the envious and petty. Because he has forfeited his status as a preacher and abandoned the folk art that formerly protected him, John can no longer make a living as a carpenter. All of a sudden, no one in the town has work for him, and John barely has enough money to eat. Only when he leaves town and begins preaching again does John regain his sense of self and his oral identity. Only then are the people of Eatonville ready to accept him back into the fold, but he dies before the reintegration into the community is complete.

Because the black townsfolk have been influenced by the need to assimilate into the white, literate community, they cannot accept his gift as completely natural. John cannot fit in, and his alienation dramatizes Hurston's own isolation from any support group. Like Hurston, John is too profoundly influenced by his residual orality to be accepted comfortably by the people who surround him.

In *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Hurston once again tries to create an oral novel. Although she still does not succeed, she comes much closer to her personal goal of integrating her oral past with her literate

present. The oral environment of Eatonville is also the setting for Hurston's second novel, and, in fact, her first two books share many other common characteristics. For example, this novel is also autobiographical, and the protagonist, Janie, is again a projection of Hurston herself. The story was written after Hurston ended an affair she was having with a much younger man, and the portrayal of the love between Janie and Tea Cake (Tea Cake is much younger than Janie) is based on Hurston's own love affair.²⁸ In her imaginative projection of the love affair, however, Hurston has made Janie and Tea Cake members of an oral folk community. Hurston has projected herself and her lover into new roles in the folk idiom—roles in which their love might have been able to survive without the tensions of literacy and Hurston's academic pursuits. In addition, as in *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, Hurston's nostalgia for her folk past has led her to create a novel that glorifies oral arts and traditions. Once again Hurston has transliterated the sounds of black dialect, but this time she has not obscured the poetry of oral speech. Instead, she has made it accessible to an audience that may not be completely familiar with the dialect's eccentricities. Like its predecessor, this novel is also filled with folkloric images and traditions. However, although the mythic images that fill Janie's world are reminiscent of the images and metaphors found in folktales, Hurston has tailored them to Janie's individual view of life. For example, the Story of the Man, with which I began this paper, is reminiscent of a Creation myth, but it is Janie's own rationalization for the events of her own life and is not grounded in a more universal mythos.

In general in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Hurston spends much less time describing oral traditions in detail than she did in *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, and concentrates instead on the growth of both Janie's self-awareness and her oral skills, which are ultimately tied to the tradition that John shares; Hurston equates Janie's gradual self-discovery with the blossoming of those oral skills. As Janie slowly learns to tell "whoppers" and trade insults on the front porch after work is done, she also begins to understand and accept her own womanhood and black heritage. What Hurston sees as the true essence of black identity, the vitality and spontaneity of the oral environment, is what Janie gains in this novel and is what Hurston searched for in her life.

When the novel opens, we see Janie at the end of her search for identity: the mature Janie, who walks into Eatonville in overalls, is poised, self-confident, and radiant despite the death of her husband,

Tea Cake. She has completed her integration with her oral self in a way that Hurston never could, and the proof that Janie's orality has blossomed is that she is able to tell the story of her life in a traditional folk form, the memorate, to her best friend Pheoby. Janie's memorate lasts from page 20 to page 283 and is the essence of the novel. Before she had grown to understand her own orality with Tea Cake's help, she never could have articulated her story.

At the beginning of her life story, Janie is essentially impotent: she lacks a voice in her oral community. This voicelessness is emblematic of Janie's alienation from the power of her own orality. Although she intuitively understands the beauty of the natural world, as symbolized by the pear tree that she worships wordlessly, and tries to resist the marriage that her grandmother imposes on her, Janie is powerless and must obey the old woman's wishes. Later, when her marriage to Kilicks isn't working out, she tries to express her feelings to him, but they can't seem to communicate. The only solution left her is to run away instead of facing the problem. Joe Starks, her second husband, does treat her better than Kilicks did, but he doesn't allow her to associate with the townsfolk and won't listen to her opinions. For Joe, a women shouldn't think or feel: her purpose in life is to look beautiful and show off her husband's good taste. The few times that Janie gives her opinion in the discussions around the store, Joe berates her for talking too much. Only after Joe and Janie have been married for seventeen years does Janie begin to find her voice and stand up for herself, but that voice is harsh and full of the bitterness of years of repression. For example, when Joe tells Janie in front of the townsfolk that her rump is hanging down to her knees, Janie retorts:

Naw, Ah ain't no young gal no mo' but den Ah ain't no old woman neither. Ah reckon Ah looks mah age too. But Ah'm uh woman every inch of me, and Ah know it. Dat's uh whole lot more'n *you* kin say.... Humph! Talkin' 'bout me lookin' old! When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak the change uh life. (p. 122-123)

Later, when he is dying, Janie is again brutally honest with him and tries to talk out why their marriage didn't work, but Joe refuses to recognize the power of the oral lifeworld and dies cursing her. With Joe's death, Janie begins to enjoy her freedom. For the first time since she married Joe, she sits on the front porch of the store and listens to the lies that the men tell. When she meets her young lover, Tea Cake, she blossoms even more, because he wants her to open up and become a part of the folk community. He plays blues to her, takes

her to the church picnic, and teaches her to play checkers. He allows all sides of her to grow and heals her mistrust of her own orality. Eventually, when Janie and Tea Cake are picking beans on the mud flats of southern Florida, Janie has enough self-confidence to begin to tell stories herself. The ultimate test of Janie's storytelling is the life story that is contained in the novel. In telling Pheoby and us, the readers, her life story, she invites us to take part in her search and her accomplishment, and because she is such a skillful storyteller, she is capable of teaching us to know and love her because of her simplicity and sincerity. Tea Cake has given Janie a voice and an identity, and she has learned how to use her power. She is no longer a mere extension of any of her husbands. As the novel ends, Janie is revelling in her new-found skills and identity. Her oral world is full of bounty and hope:

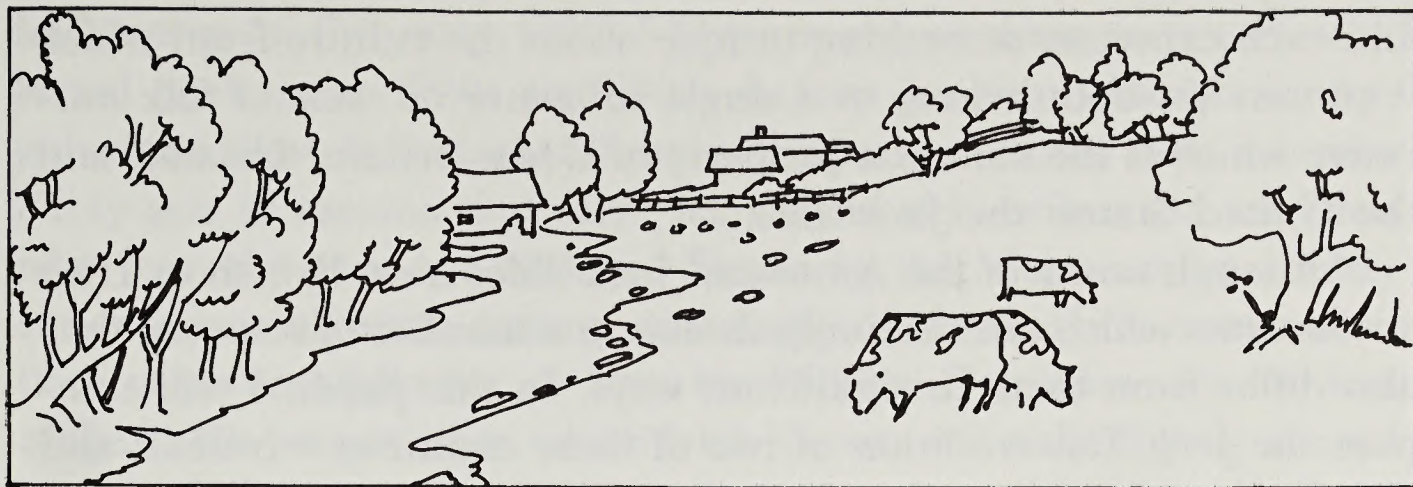
She pulled in the horizon like a great fish-net. Pulled it from around the waist of the world and draped it over her shoulder. So much of life in its meshes! She called in her soul to come and see. (p. 286)

Through Janie, Hurston has achieved a reintegration with the oral world of her childhood. With Janie as a persona, Hurston has transcended the alienation that accompanies writing and has managed to fuse the two antithetical worlds of orality and literacy.

In these two novels, Hurston defines her idea of the perfect Negro, who is spontaneous, vital, and in touch with his or her oral traditions. Hurston's perfect Negro can tell a story beautifully and sincerely, whether relating a memorate or preaching a sermon. John is already this ideal character at his story's beginning and must fight to reattain his gift of folk preaching in the face of hypocrisy; Janie's entire novel is devoted to watching her attain the same goal for the first time. By writing novels about this quest, Hurston attempts to integrate orality and literacy for herself and for her readers. Hurston reaffirms her oral past and invites the readers to do the same.

NOTES

1. Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), p. 139. Parenthetical references to this novel in the text refer to this edition.
2. At the close of the Civil War, less than 5% of the Freedmen could read and write. Monroe N. Work, ed., "Education," *Negro Year Book: An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro*, 1912 ed., p. 102.
3. Walter J. Ong, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 18.
4. Ong, p. 18.
5. Ong, p. 17.
6. Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), p. 42.
7. Robert E. Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), pp. 62 and 99.
8. Hemenway, p. 90.
9. Hemenway, p. 102.
10. Lillie P. Howard, *Zora Neale Hurston*, Twayne's United States Authors Series 381 (Boston: Twayne, 1980), p. 40. Also, Hemenway, pp. 93 and 231.
11. Hemenway, p. 99.
12. Hemenway, p. 277.
13. From Langston Hughes's *The Big Sea* as quoted in Larry Neal, "Eatonville's Zora: A Profile," *Black Review* 2 (July 1974), 14. Hughes has been criticized for his depiction.
14. Hemenway, pp. 219-21.
15. Hemenway, p. 220.
16. Hemenway, pp. 106-107.
17. Hemenway, pp. 112-113.
18. Hemenway, p. 226.
19. Howard, p. 74.
20. Howard, pp. 90-91.
21. Ong, *Orality*, p. 151.
22. Quotation from a *New York Times* critic. Found in James W. Byrd, "Zora Neale Hurston: A Novel Folklorist," *Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin* 21 (1955), 40.
23. Larry Neal, Preface, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, by Zora Neale Hurston (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1971), p. 5.
24. Howard, p. 79.
25. Ong, *Interfaces*, p. 103.
26. All parenthetical references to *Jonah's Gourd Vine* come from Zora Neale Hurston, *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1971).
27. Howard, p. 78.
28. Hemenway, p. 231.



1986 Cratis D. Williams Prize

“Mother Bake My Cake and Kill My Cock”: Social Structure and the Irish and American Jack Tales

By Julie Henigan

Nippy says, “I don’t guess I’ll ever be back to see ya, Grandpa.” He took the Yankee Doodle back to the old man and got his two yoke of oxen, the half a bushel of gold and the youngest daughter to marry. Nippy played the Yankee Doodle while they all danced and celebrated their weddings. They took their oxen and their gold and their wives home, built houses and settled down and lived happy ever after.¹

So, Jack an’ the lady came along in the coach till they came to the poor old mother’s dure. “Are ye there mother?” “I am.” “Well, I have a wife home wit’ me, an’ I brought her to be your humble servant all the days o’ yer life.” So, he brought her into the little house. “G’wan now mother,” says he, “an’ sit down. There’s a crown an’ yer head all the days o’ yer life. She’ll have to do everythin’ in this house, for I only brought her to be your maid.” “Well, Jack, avic, she’s a lovely lady an’ I’ll work along wi’ her.” “Not a ha’ porth ever ye’ll do mother,” says he. “Sit down there now upon that big stone in the corner.”... So, they got marrit, an’ lived united, an’ had family in basketfulls an’ threw them out in shovelfulls.²

The preceding passages are from the conclusions of two related folk narratives. The former is from the United States (Kentucky) and the latter from Ireland. Each is representative of its native tradition,

and each expresses something unique about the culture from which it comes. Yet both belong to a single subgenre or cycle of folk narrative which is the common property of Great Britain, Ireland, and the United States: the Jack Tale.

Although many of the American Jack Tales have British or Irish antecedents which are strikingly similar in a number of respects, they also differ from them in significant ways. In this paper, I will compare the Jack Tale tradition of two of these countries—Ireland and the United States—and examine these differences, in order to demonstrate the ways in which each depends upon and reflects its own “cultural climate.” Rather than attempt a comprehensive comparison, I will concentrate on aspects of the tales which reflect structure and characterization.

This comparison will by no means be definitive, given the limited number of texts available, especially of the Irish tales. American Jack Tales have received considerable attention in this country, particularly since the publication of Richard Chase’s anthology *The Jack Tales* in 1940. While the eighteen tales included in this anthology are Chase’s “retellings”—collations of several texts edited to Chase’s taste—a comparatively large number of verbatim texts also exists, thanks to the work of collectors like Isobel Carter, Leonard Roberts, and Vance Randolph. All of these texts are from either Appalachia or the Ozarks (a region settled primarily by Appalachians, and which, for the purposes of this paper, I shall include in the designation “Appalachia”).

The Irish Jack Tale, unfortunately, has fared less well: there are only a handful of published texts, although about half of these are, thankfully, direct transcriptions from oral tradition. There is no Irish anthology of Jack Tales, although fourteen of the seventeen travellers’ tales included in George Gmelch’s *To Shorten the Road* are Jack Tales. Most of these are transcriptions of tales recorded on wax cylinders by the Irish Folklore Commission in the early 1930s, and thus are the most reliable texts available to the general reader. Many more tales collected by the Commission await translation from Gaelic to English before any extensive scholarship can be undertaken on the Irish Jack Tale tradition.

Although many of the texts with which I shall be dealing in this paper were collected in the twentieth century, there is good reason to believe that they also represent the tradition as it existed in the nineteenth century—and perhaps earlier. Many of the American tales were collected from descendants or relatives of Council Harmon of Beech Mountain, North Carolina, who is said to have learned them from

his mother in the early 1800s.³ Since many of these texts were collected during the 1920s and '30s—before the huge changes in Appalachian lifestyle brought about by the Second World War, it is probably safe to assume that these texts accurately reflect the tradition of at least the previous century.⁴ Similarly, the Irish texts are mostly either from nineteenth-century anthologies, consisting of literary redactions of current folktales, or from the Folklore Commission's archives of the 1930s—a period in which Irish life was still only slightly altered by twentieth-century innovations. I am therefore making the (perhaps debatable) assumption that both Irish and American texts reflect the world of this period, and that the communities they represent are those respectively of the Appalachian settler/native and of the Irish farmer before the lifestyle of either had been significantly affected by the “ravages” of this century.

The Jack Tale derives its name from the presence, in the majority of individual narratives which comprise the cycle, of a central male character named “Jack.” Although certain tales are marked by similar plot structure and content, this identification is often complicated by their central characters possessing other names, such as “Nippy,” “Merrywise,” “John,” and “Mickey.”

But if the name sometimes varies, the actual character of Jack remains more or less constant from one story to the next, falling into one of two categories: trickster figure or fairy-tale hero. In his former guise, Jack wins the day through cleverness and manipulation, and has little or no contact with the world of magic or the supernatural. In his heroic form, while he frequently makes use of his wits, it is by means of the supernatural rather than guile that Jack prevails.

Jack Tales are usually classified as *Marchen*—or fairy-tales: tales of wonder in which the world of the supernatural is entered and the “dull and miserable world of reality” is left behind.⁵ Some may question the accuracy of including the trickster Jack Tales in this category. But Linda Degh defines *Marchen* simply as “an adventure story with a single hero”;⁶ and C.P. Gutierrez, in her careful study of the North Carolina Jack Tales, argues convincingly that the distinction between the trickster and magic Jack Tales is one of content rather than structure, and is thus not a defining feature of the narrative.⁷ Structure in this context means the overlying framework within which the specific events of a tale occur. According to Gutierrez, Jack's entering an “other world”—whether one of trickery or of magic—is of principal importance.⁸ This view is supported by the fact that both the trickster and magic Jack Tales occur side-by-side in the repertoires of traditional tale tellers.

Structure, Gutierrez argues, rather than content, best defines the Jack Tale, for, as she observes, “while the content of the Jack Tales varies greatly from tale to tale, structural analysis proves that the Jack Tales nevertheless belong to one structural type; that is, almost all Jack Tales have a common structure regardless of their varying content.”⁹ Gutierrez describes this “type” in terms of the models which Vladimir Propp designed for the structural analysis of Russian *Marchen*. Using Propp’s nomenclature, she identifies this structural type as one which makes use of the joint formulae of “lack/lack liquidated” and “hero departs/hero returns.”¹⁰ As we shall see, while the same basic structure also applies to both the Irish and American Jack Tales, the form it takes in each tradition is significantly different. To demonstrate this, I shall examine each element of these formulae as they apply to both Irish and American tales.

According to Propp’s system, in order to qualify as *Marchen*, a folktale must contain one “obligatory function” or structural element. This particular function entails the disruption of the life of a family, either by harm or injury to a member of that family inflicted by a villain, or because “one member of a family lacks something, desires to have something.” Alan Dundes states it more simply when he observes that “either villainy or insufficiency can initiate the folktale’s movement.”¹¹

Gutierrez notes that in the majority of Appalachian Jack Tales, insufficiency rather than villainy initiates the movement of the tales, specifically, the insufficiency of poverty.¹² “Once upon a time,” begins one Appalachian tale, “there lived an old woman and her grandson on an old farm. They were very, very poor, so poor they could hardly keep wolves from the door.”¹³ In “Jack and the Three Steers,” Ray Hicks of Beech Mountain, North Carolina, tells us that “Jack and his mother, they was without of flour and nothing to eat.”¹⁴ In another Hicks tale, “The Doctor’s Daughter,” the chief motivating factor seems to be harsh working conditions, but again, it is poverty which dictates these conditions: Jack and his parents “were a restin’, a stayin’ on this doctor’s place, a share-croppin’, and a workin’ fer him a doin’ everything that he said. Had to, you know. Gosh back at that time if you rented ... ye know people liked renters to work....”¹⁵ In “John and the Wicked Princess,” a Kentucky tale, John’s father does manage to give his son some money to help him seek his fortune, but it is barely enough to start him out: five cents. “That’s all I’ve got,” he tells John apologetically.¹⁶

Tales in which Jack is from the outset financially comfortable do occur in Appalachian tradition, but they are far less typical than those in which he is impoverished. In such a tale, "Jack and Old Fire Dragon," the disruption occurs when Jack's parents give their three sons an inheritance of land, and the insufficiency lies in the siblings not having yet established independent livings of their own.¹⁷

Poverty is also the predominant form of "lack" or insufficiency in the Irish Jack Tales—although the terms in which poverty is described sometimes differ in detail. In "Jack and his Comrades," collected by David Kennedy in the nineteenth century, the mention of potatoes adds a particularly Irish touch: "Once there was a poor widow, and often there was, and she had a son. A very scarce summer came, and they didn't know how they'd live till the new potatoes would be fit for eating."¹⁸ Life for the rural Irish community in which these tales were told was no less a struggle than it was for that of Appalachia. Nor was work any less a matter of enforced servitude, as the introduction to the traveller tale "Johnnie and Tommie" makes clear:

There was wance an' wance an' very good times it was. There was a poor labourin' man, an' he was only a herd. An' he had two sons an' wan daughter. An' the poor woman used to be workin' in the big house every day for her day's wages, for to help to rear the family. Whin poor Johnnie an' Tommie used to come home from school, they used to have to go to the wood to gather a lock of sticks; an' the little girl used to do the housework at home.¹⁹

The prevalence of poverty in both the Irish and American tales is, of course, more than a means of "initiating movement" within the narratives. It is also an accurate reflection of the harsh world in which the tale-tellers of both traditions lived. In her essay on folk narrative, Linda Degh notes that *Marchen* show "a natural adjustment to the milieu of teller and audience."²⁰ In other words, tales reflect the everyday realities of the world in which they are told—including the important social and economic realities which shape that world. The Jack Tale amply illustrates this point. The emphasis on poverty as the chief motivating factor reflects a world in which poverty was a more conspicuous and compelling force than villainy.

Hand in hand with the insufficiency or "lack" function is another of Propp's functions, "the hero leaves home."²¹ This, too, is an essential element in the Appalachian Jack Tale formula. Motivated by poverty, Jack invariably sets forth to correct his own or his family's want. Sometimes this is his family's idea; sometimes, his own. In "Old

Greasybeard," a Kentucky tale, there are three brothers, whose "mother and daddy was getting old and they said, 'Boys, you better go out and seek your fortune for pretty soon we aren't going to be able to take care of you.'"²² More typically, however, the Appalachian Jack himself takes the initiative, setting off to obtain provisions for his family, money, or a wife for himself—or simply to "seek his fortune." With characteristic American enterprise, he sallies forth with a careless, independent spirit, which as we shall see, is less evident in his Irish counterpart.

There is in all the American Jack Tales a sense of mobility and freedom not present in the Irish tales. In American tales, Jack may even be portrayed as "lazy," and yet he always possesses a readiness to "pull out ... and try his luck in some other section of the country."²³ When his movement is restricted by another as in "The Doctor's Daughter," Jack rebels against the constraint on his freedom: "Jack, he, he just couldn't stand it. This doctor was a-pinnin' him down so tight ... and he just couldn't stand being bound down that tight."²⁴ In "Jack Outwits the Giants," a tale collected by Leonard Roberts, not only Jack, but his entire family is on the move.²⁵

This sense of mobility reflects the very real physical freedom of the period in which both the Appalachians and Ozarks were settled, when "even as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, immigrants in large numbers continued to travel along the mountain trails and passes" for religious, social, and economic reasons.²⁶ This period, roughly from 1720 to 1850, "throughout the United States, has been designated as one of movement."²⁷ The Scotch-Irish (or Anglo-Celtic, as Cecil Sharp preferred to call them) people who in large part settled the Virginia Valley, the Appalachian Highlands, and later the Ozarks—and who, in all probability, retained the Jack Tales from their British and Irish forebears—were people to whom migration and resettlement were a natural condition of life:

"The Southerner packed up his household goods ... faced the west, and traveled by the most convenient road." An illustration of this characteristic is given in the answer made by a North Carolina man who, traveling westward with all his earthly possessions, was asked where he was going. "No where in pertick'lar," he answered. "Me and my wife thought we'd hunt a place to settle. We've no money nor no plunder—nothin' but ourselves and this nag—we thought we'd try our luck in a new country."²⁸

There was also a sense of space and a very real availability of land in America during this period, which was unimaginable in Europe.

Freedom of movement became a matter of course in this new land, in which the chief barriers to movement and expansion were natural ones: mountains to cross, trees to fell, land to clear. “Newground” is frequently a motivating force in the Appalachian Jack Tales. In “Jack and Old Fire Dragon,” Jack and his brothers receive newground as a gift from their parents.²⁹ In “Jack and the Giant’s Newground” (an Appalachian version of the British “Jack and the Giant-Killer,” in which “newground” is conspicuously absent), Jack begins his career as giant-killer by clearing the newground owned by a neighboring king.³⁰ In other tales, like “Old Greasybeard” and “Nippy and the Yankee Doodle,” Jack obtains newground by unspecified means.³¹ In “Jack and the Gower,” an Ozark tale, an itinerant Jack is prompted to challenge the monstrous “Gower” by the promise of his own land should he succeed in slaying the monster.³² (The word *gower* corresponds phonetically to the mutated form of *cwar* [mutated *gwar*], the Welsh word for ‘giant’).

Other Appalachian tales reflect a more contemporary kind of movement: the itinerancy necessitated by an environment scarcely conducive to self-sufficiency, one in which the family income had to be supplemented by transient employment, as in post-world war, post-industrialized Appalachia. This phenomenon is illustrated in tales such as Chase’s “Jack and the North West Wind,” in which “Jack’s daddy was off somewhere on the public works a-buildin’ roads, and Jack’s two brothers, Will and Tom, they’d gone off to another settlement huntin’ ’em a job of work.”³³ In Ray Hick’s telling of “Big Man Jack,” “Jack and his mother, they was seeing it hard, and he got out a-hunting for a job.”³⁴

In the Irish Jack Tales, although Jack invariably departs from home, the decision to leave frequently comes from someone else: a parent, for instance, who can no longer support him. In “Jack the Ghost,” Jack’s mother complains to her voracious son, “‘ah’, thin be this an’ be that, Jackeen, yer twenty-one years in age, an’ it’s about time ye sthruck out fer yerself. Yer afther eatin’ a scone o’ platez and five quarts o’ buttermilk. I’m not able to feed or support ye any longer.”³⁵ In “The Fiery Dragon,” a neighbor offers to relieve Jack’s mother of her “thick” son: “Well, Mary, will ye gi’e me that gossoon. An I’ll thrain him an’, an’ make a ploughman out o’ him; an’ he’ll be better nor he is wit’ you. Aren’t ye kilt feedin’ him and lookin’ afther him?”³⁶ In other stories, Jack departs—at least initially—only to go to the fair to sell an animal. Unlike his American counterpart, who simply “lights out” with no particular intention of returning, the Irish

Jack often leaves reluctantly, and he frequently accompanies his departure with a promise to return home after he has gained his fortune. There is little sense that Jack can simply pull up stakes and move on. He certainly cannot be assured of finding "newground." The motivation of free land never occurs in the Irish tales because it was not a reality in the traditional Irish community. For this reason, the sense of possibilities in the Irish tales is more circumscribed—limited to the realities of a society in which land was a scarce commodity, attainable only by inheritance, marriage, or appropriation. It is curious to note that even in the traveller tales, this reality is emphasized: not one mentions an itinerant family.

The corollary of the "lack" or insufficiency function in Propp's system is the function "lack liquidated," which Gutierrez pairs with the function of "hero returns."³⁷ True to this formula, Jack, having embarked upon adventures in that "other world" of the fairy-tale, returns to the real world, the initial insufficiency remedied. In the Appalachian tales, this return is not necessarily a return to Jack's immediate point of departure—and seldom to his family, if he had one to begin with. The lack—impoverishment—is always liquidated by Jack's attainment of wealth and, almost as frequently, a wife, a house, and land of his own. The ideal is expressed in the conclusion of "Jack and the Gower," in which, after Jack has slain the monster,

the citizens had a big meeting and took up a collection and give Jack a lot of gold money. They give him a farm with a good house on it, and plenty of store, too. Jack was a rich man now, so him and the pretty girl got married. Everything was all right from then on, and the whole bunch of 'em lived happy ever after.³⁸

"People who settle a new area," observes Gutierrez, "are starting over."³⁹ This is precisely what Jack does in tale after tale in the American tradition, usually in relative isolation, independent of his original family. In Appalachia isolation has long been a condition of life, largely dictated by the simple fact that, as writers like Horace Kephart noted at the turn of the century, good bottom lands were few and far between. Hazel Creek, North Carolina, where Kephart lived at that time, consisted of "forty-two households (about two hundred souls) scattered over an area eight miles long by two wide."⁴⁰ John C. Campbell attributed this movement and settlement into relative isolation to

the natural increase of families, the rapid succession of generations pushing their clearings farther and farther up creeks and minor valleys away from the land already under cultivation by older members of the family.⁴¹

In view of this, it is not surprising that when the Appalachian Jack reenters the "real world," it is not to return to his natal home, but to create a new home of his own. "Jack, like the early settlers," notes Gutierrez, "is not satisfied with his situation in life, and so he 'heads off' self-confident and self-reliant, to create a new and satisfactory life."⁴²

Jack's actions are in keeping with the Appalachian experience in which community and family, while still unquestionably important, existed in a far more dispersed form than was the case in agrarian Europe. It is perhaps for this reason that family—Jack's parents and siblings—play such a peripheral role in most of the Appalachian tales. In many cases, his family is not even mentioned, or, alternatively, Jack is identified as an orphan: Jack does not return to his family because he has no family to which to return. In many of Jane Gentry's tales, Jack's parents are dead, and in "Jack and the Gower," he is simply a boy who "lived away up in the mountains."⁴³ In other tales, Jack's home remains unspecified, and "home" seems to indicate a general location rather than a family or household. In fact, in less than one tenth of the American Jack Tale variants does Jack return to his original family.

Jack's brothers (who are usually named Tom and Will) appear in perhaps a third of the American tales, but they add little to either the structure or the action of the story. They usually serve only as foils to Jack in his adventures—failing where Jack succeeds. They do, however, appear in the conclusion of some tales, helping Jack and each other to homestead, in true frontier fashion. In "Old Greasybeard," the three brothers "took the girls back to their house and each one of them helped the other one build a big house for them to live in ... And they all lived happy ever after."⁴⁴ Thus, Jack's movement is linear—away from his point of origin (his family and parental home) toward new land and a new life. He is "starting over" in every sense, acquiring "what he has never had," not only in terms of wealth, but in all aspects of his life: a new home, a new wife, a new family.

When the Irish Jack returns from his exploits in the *Marchen* other-world, it is to a vastly different social and economic reality than that of the Appalachian settler—the reality of the European peasant. And although both were of the same class and occupation, in many regards their experiences could hardly have been more disparate. The Irish countryman, until quite recently, lived in a world in which mobility, both social and physical, was severely limited; that is, unless he had the means to emigrate. Unlike the Appalachian frontiersman, he did

not have the option of simply “picking up and trying his luck in some other place,” resting in the assurance that he would obtain farmland somewhere else. In general, the Irish farmer could only obtain land through inheritance or marriage, institutions which bound not only the individual farmer, but his entire bloodline—past, present, and future—to a specific plot of land. If the land was not his, but belonged to a landowner to whom he was bound as a tenant, his mobility was still more restricted.

In this closed system of land ownership, expansion could only occur by means of arranged marriages. The male heir of a family, upon marriage, would not only obtain his father's land, but would also bring into the household the land, cattle, or money which comprised his new bride's dowry. The dowry itself, however, officially belonged to the heir's father until his parents died. This ensured that the parents would be provided for, although they also continued to live in the house now owned by the son. The parents still received pride of place in the household, and the father usually continued to work the land in partnership with his son. In this patrilineal system, the presence of a least one male family member in a household was considered requisite. Thus, it was not uncommon for a household to consist of a widowed or unmarried woman (who may actually have owned the farm) and a unmarried son, brother, or other male relative who would work the land for her. Marriage was a financial and social transaction which preserved “family unity through the sequence of the generations” and bound the community together with ties of both kinship and property. Marriage and the extended family thus served to preserve a social and financial balance within the community, while it allowed the individual to embrace “ever wider numbers of his contemporaries.”⁴⁵ Unlike his Appalachian counterpart, the Irishman did not split from the original family unit, but enlarged it from within, by a process of fusion rather than fission. Dispersal did exist in the traditional Irish community. It differed, however, in degree and quality from the kind of open-ended movement which was possible in the New World. Dispersal occurred, at least in ideal circumstances, within the community: “Historically,” writes Conrad Arensburg, “all the sons and daughters were provided for on the land. Failing this, unless they emigrated beyond hope of call, they did not drop out of sight [but were] merely removed a single step.”⁴⁶ In rural Ireland, individual families were (and still are) seldom isolated from each other, except in the more remote and mountainous regions. Instead, they form a

baile or townland, in which the houses, although somewhat dispersed, are arranged so that they command a view of each other from their doorways.

This is the world to which the hero of the Irish Jack Tale belongs, and which is so vividly portrayed in a number of them. The Irish Jack shows a strong tendency when he returns home to do so quite literally, that is, to his natal home and, quite frequently, to his mother. He, too, brings with him money and sometimes a new bride, but new land or even a newly constructed house is never part of the bargain. In order to assume his rightful inheritance, the farm that has been in his family for generations, the Irish Jack must generally return to his precise point of origin. His newly acquired wealth may enable him to expand his farm, but seldom to obtain a new one—and never to start from scratch, building a farm on unsettled land. In cases where Jack does acquire property other than that of his family (say, half a kingdom for services rendered), his gain comes in the form of a dowry, and, as such, it reinforces the system designed to maintain the balance of property within the community. Again he enlarges his sphere; he doesn't leave it. If the Appalachian Jack's movement is linear, the Irish Jack's is circular. For when the latter returns from his exploits, he does not seek to establish a new household, but to restore and expand the old.

Integral to this restoration and expansion is the preservation of the family unit, which was disrupted at the beginning of the tale. This family unit may only consist of Jack's mother, but as family she takes precedence over all other considerations. This again reflects the importance in rural Irish society of the family, which was inextricably bound to the land. It also points to the consideration for one's elders so crucial in a culture where several generations must coexist under one roof and where care of the parents devolved naturally upon the children. Thus, even when Jack accepts the dowry of half a kingdom, he always sends for his mother, and the family unit is restored. In "Jack and the Ghost," Jack refuses to marry until his mother—along with an entire menagerie of farm animals—is fetched:

So the king sent a coach and four for the mother, an' she came an down.
"Oh Jackeen, avic," she says, "I never quit frettin' for ye since, an' cryin' after ye." "Thanks be to God. Ye have plinty t'aet now, an' bigger cakes nor what you gev me ... Get up here an the coach an' we'll bring Poilin, an Biddin, an' the goat." "We can't bring goats and ducks in the coach," says the King. But Jack wouldn't go unless they did, so he had to bring them.⁴⁷

Restoration of the family unit, achieved either by a return to the family circle or by a widening of that circle, seems as crucial a part of the ultimate resolution of Irish Jack Tales as the establishment of a new household in the Appalachian tales. In both, wealth, whereby the initial lack is liquidated, is an integral part of this resolution, but in neither tradition is it an end in itself. Rather, wealth is a means by which life is rendered more harmonious and less arduous. But if for the Appalachian Jack, this harmony entails creation of the new, for the Irish Jack, it means preservation of the old. In fact, the preservation of the family's disruption often provides the motivation for the Irish Jack's initial departure. He must provide, not only for himself, but for those he has left behind, whereas the Appalachian Jack is usually responsible only for himself. In "The Widow's Three Sons," Jack outwits a wealthy farmer, and then brings his spoils home to share with his mother and brothers.⁴⁸ In "The Fiery Dragon," Jack leaves to seek his fortune only after he has earned enough money to provide for his mother during his absence. When he returns from his adventures, he brings home enough money so that his mother will never be in want all the days of her life."⁴⁹

As the arranged marriage and dowry systems were the chief means by which an Irish farmer could improve his and his family's fortunes, it is not at all surprising that in many of the Irish tales, Jack's attainment of property should accompany his attainment of a bride. Nor is it extraordinary that in other tales Jack should bring a new wife home to his mother's house to be her "humble servant all the days of her life." Commonly, an Irish farmer's wife moved in with her husband's family after marriage, an arrangement reflected in many tales. In "Jack and the Bear," the dynamics of the arranged marriage are represented in great detail. Although Jack and his sweetheart have a natural affection for one another, the match must be approved by Jack's mother and the girl's father. Jack's mother gives them her blessing, but tells the girl, " 'Well, but we must ask your father and mother.' 'Me mother is dead,' she says, 'an' me father'd only be glad to see me settled down. For there's more marriage in his head than there was in mine.' "⁵⁰ The relationship between mother and daughter-in-law in these arranged marriages could often be problematic, but that portrayed in "Jack and the Bear" is an ideal one, for Jack's wife is properly humble and devoted to her new mother: "an they lived as happy. An' the mother never got a daughter as kind to her as the daughter-in-law was. She was and that she'd wash her feet, she was so kind an' good. An' she loved her; she couldn't let her out o' her

sight.’’⁵¹ This tale is structurally atypical, as it takes up where most of the other tales end, in marriage, but it illustrates the extent to which they reflect Irish familial and social structures.

Character is technically an element of content rather than structure, yet it is closely associated with structure, reflecting—and often determining—the movement of a tale. As might be expected, Irish and American Jack Tales differ as much in characterization as they do in plot, reflecting the divergent motives, values, and behavior that propel their protagonists to their respective goals. These differences take on particular significance if the tales are viewed as a form of *Entwicklungsmärchen* or “fairy-tale of development.”⁵² Max Luthi sees the fairy-tale hero’s journey between two worlds as corresponding “to the course followed by the maturing or matured human being throughout life.”⁵³

The fairytale hero is ... detachable ... He departs from home ... It may also happen that the hero returns home, but that is something relatively unimportant, failing to occur in many instances. The fairy tale hero is not one who returns to his point of origin ... but one who by nature leaves home to wander out into the world, in a sense into the void. The real fairy-tale hero is no Lucky Hans who comes back to his mother.... Lucky Hans is presented to us as one who returns, but the real fairytale hero is one who departs.⁵⁴

Luthi further describes the fairytale hero as “being isolated and thus having no family or community ties” and as “potentially open to entering into new relationships.”⁵⁵ All of these attributes apply with remarkable closeness to the American Jack Tale hero. He is independent, self-reliant, and enterprising. More often than not he does not return to his point of origin, but wanders out into the “void” in order to create new possibilities and a new life.

Both the Appalachian Jack and Luthi’s prototypical fairytale hero resemble to a marked degree the type of man who shaped and was shaped by the southern Appalachian experience. Jack, notes Gutierrez, is a non-conformist and a “self-made man ... the only man who will be successful in a backwoods environment.” Like the settler, he is “more concerned with the future [he is] going to build than with maintaining a past [he has] left behind.”⁵⁶ She points out that Jack is always financially independent at the conclusion of the American tales, and, by extension, he is psychologically independent, as well.⁵⁷ Indeed, independence is the Appalachian Jack’s most conspicuous trait. It is also, not coincidentally, the characteristic most frequently assigned to the Appalachian mountain dweller. “Heredity and environment,”

observes John C. Campbell, "have conspired to make him an extreme individualist."⁵⁸ Forced by geography to live in relative isolation, he had to depend on independence and self-reliance for survival, both physically and psychologically. But these traits were also valued by themselves as signs of character; for if isolation was imposed upon the frontiersman, it was also chosen by him as well. W.D. Weatherford, describing his grandfather's homesteading days in East Tennessee, relates that after his arrival

in the course of three or four years, other pioneering souls moved up to within three or four miles of him and built cabins. One would have supposed such neighbors would have been welcomed, for the Indians were still very troublesome. Not so with my ancestor—he wanted room. He did not want to be crowded and did not want to be dependent on anyone for protection.⁵⁹

Even the American Jack's mother displays such independence. In "Gilly and his Goatskin Clothes" (a Kentucky tale of obvious Irish derivation), after Jack has won a princess for a wife, her father the king invites Jack's widowed mother to live in the castle, "but she just came for a visit and then went home again!"⁶⁰

The character of the Irish Jack, on the other hand, seems to represent the opposite of his American counterpart and to personify the antithesis of Luthi's fairytale hero. He frequently returns to his precise point of departure—and to his mother. His independence is circumscribed by familial obligations and dependencies, and he is open to new relationships only insofar as they are consonant with maintaining family unity. He does not often choose to isolate himself; nor does he equate success in terms of physical independence.

The Irish Jack is greatly attached to his home and to whatever family he has—especially to his mother. Home is his natural element, his genealogical heritage, and, in part, his very identity. By American Jack Tale standards, the Irish Jack has an unusually strong relationship with his mother, and sometimes expresses great reluctance to leave home out of concern for her. In "The Fiery Dragon," before he leaves, Jack asks his mother, "Sure, ye won't be lonely," after which the narrator inserts the comment, "He was very fond of his mother."⁶¹ In "Jack the Ghost," Jack returns home three times before he actually sets out in earnest, asking for a larger "journey-cake" each time. Later, while in the king's employ, he declares, "I wish to God I had me mother here, an' I'd stay forever. But, sure, mebbe she'd come sometimes. Mebbe you'd sind fer her an' give her a good feed, for

the poor cracker hasn't half enough to eat.'"⁶² In "Johnnie and Tommy," when Johnnie returns home to his mother, like many another Irish son, he afterwards "never got marrit."⁶³

Yet the Irish Jack is no more a "Lucky Hans" (the numbskull hero of a number of German "farce fairy-tales") than is the fiercely independent American Jack.⁶⁴ He is not a regressive anti-hero whose return to his mother symbolizes a lack of emotional development. He is, in fact, quite the reverse. Jack's restoration of the family unit, whether or not this entails an actual return to his birthplace, indicates his development from the dependent, irresponsible son, eating his mother out of house and home, to the fully matured man, able to provide for his family. Just like any other full-grown Irishman, he must assume the role of "man of the house," the position of responsibility which was once held by his father. In so doing, Jack acts out of a value system whose chief virtues, responsibility and devotion to one's "people," are of primary importance. They ensure continuity and equilibrium within the community and help to maintain a balance between the complexly interwoven dependencies which hold it together. If Jack were to disregard these dependencies, he would figuratively threaten the very basis of the society which engendered him. They are, in a very real sense, necessary for the survival of this society.

Herein lies the fundamental difference between the American and the Irish Jack heroes. Each one exemplifies the characteristics which are most valued—and most necessary—in the society from which he comes. For the American Jack, these qualities are independence, initiative, and self-reliance. For the Irish Jack, while these traits are important to a degree, allowing him to venture out into the unknown, act heroically, win princesses, etc., they are secondary to the attributes of responsibility and devotion to family and place. John C. Campbell's assertion that the Appalachian settler gave allegiance to no one except by choice does not apply to the Irish Jack, whose allegiances are strong, multiple, and in a sense predetermined.⁶⁵ I do not mean to imply that in the Appalachian community the family was any less valued than in the Irish community. There, too, it played an important role, and the bonds of family were strongly woven. But the Appalachian region was characterized by flux and movement: dispersal was the norm. The traditional Irish community also existed in a state of motion, but it was an internal movement of exchange and balance, which kept the community stable and physically static. If in Appalachia, "each household in its hollow lived its own life," the Irish household was a part of an organic whole from which separation meant a kind

of death. Like Luthi's fairy-tale hero, the Irish Jack is "open to entering into new relationships," but these relationships are bounded by community. Unlike Luthi's prototype, his family and community ties are strong. And unlike the Appalachian Jack, he is just as concerned with maintaining the past as he is with building the future, because for him the two are intertwined.

Thus, although the characters of both the Appalachian and the Irish Jack develop during the course of each tale, each one does so in a strikingly different way. In both traditions, Jack is depicted as an inexperienced, irresponsible, even lazy boy, who by dint of such qualities as cleverness, initiative, courage, kindness, or simple serendipity surmounts all obstacles and achieves the status and rewards of maturity. The American Jack hero moves from a state of dependency to one of total independence from his natal household: he is able to support a family of his own, outside of his original sphere. The Irish Jack moves from a position of subordination to one of superordination *within* his original family, which he may expand but not abandon when he assumes the responsibilities of adulthood.

Marchen are meant, by and large, for an audience of children, to whom they impart the behavior, values, and social patterns which will help them to adapt to the world they must inhabit as adults. While these tales often deal with the supernatural and superhuman, they also vividly portray the actual world of the traditional communities in which they are told. Jack himself, as Chase has observed, rarely appears as a "dashing young prince";⁶⁶ rather, he is a character with whom the members of those traditional communities could easily identify, and whose trials and triumphs they could make their own. Thus, Jack serves at least partially as a social role model, traveling the road from immaturity to maturity in a way that renders his development attractive and desirable. In this respect, structure and characterization in the tales are intertwined: the initial insufficiency in each tale forces an immature Jack to go out into the world, where he learns the lessons, undergoes the trials, and develops the characteristics that will enable him to mature. Only *after* this development is complete may he return from the fairytale otherworld and remove the insufficiency which necessitated his original departure. This development does not, of course, manifest itself in a deeply psychological fashion, but is indicated by the events of the tale and by the sense of progression implicit in the overlying structure of the tales.

In depicting Jack's development according to the standards of maturity of Irish or American society, the tales reflect and reinforce the values and structures of each society by presenting "a particular view of man and the world" to their respective audiences.⁶⁷ That this "particular view" should differ so much between the Irish and Appalachian traditions indicates the extent to which the tales had to be altered in order to fit accurately the American experience. The Anglo-Celtic peoples who settled the Appalachians had to modify and adapt their lives and their perceptions enormously to suit the vastly different conditions and necessities of a foreign land. That Jack, having made the ocean voyage with this hardy and resilient people, should have adjusted with equal facility to his new home is only natural.

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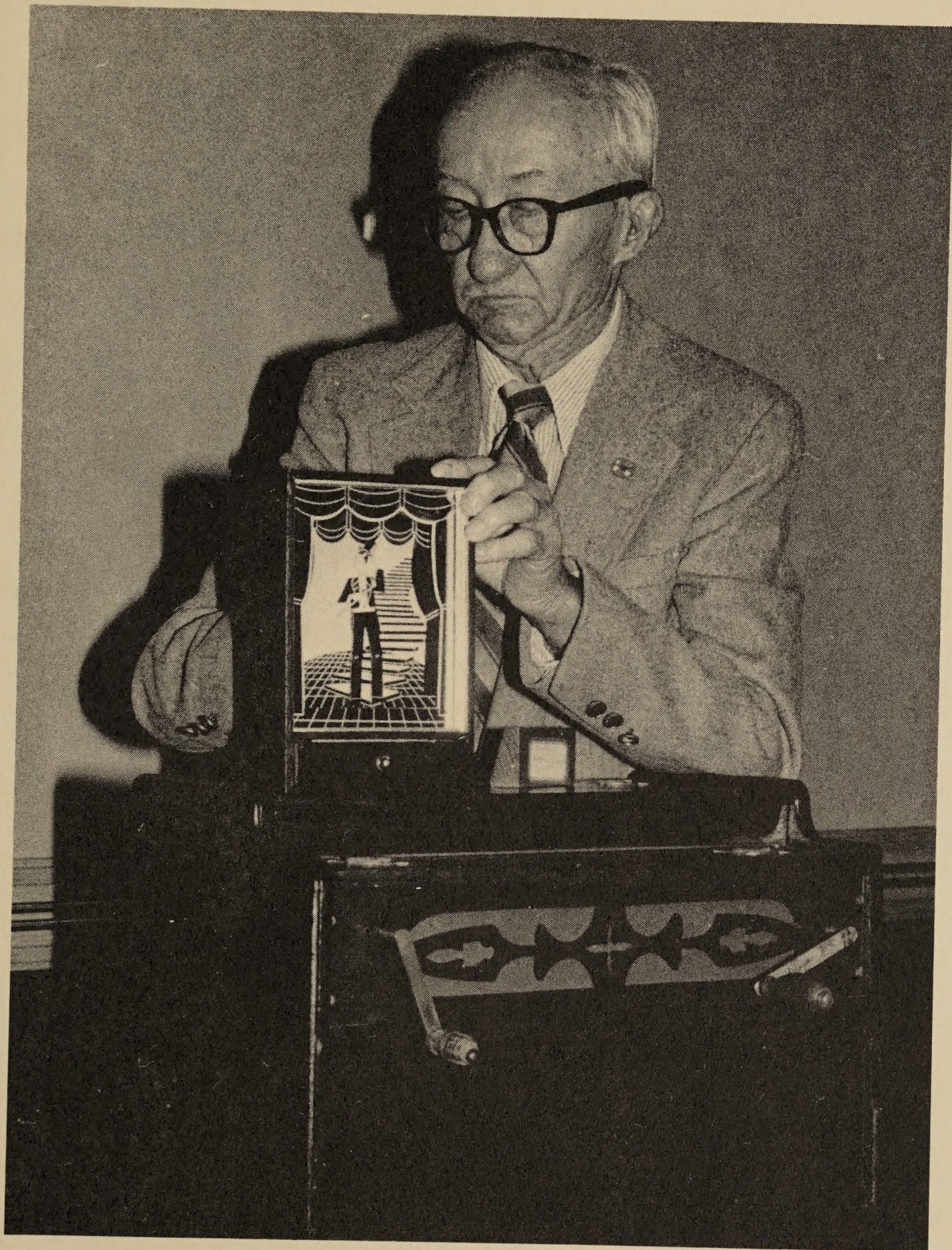
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North Carolina Folklore Journal

Vol. 35, No. 1

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CONTENTS

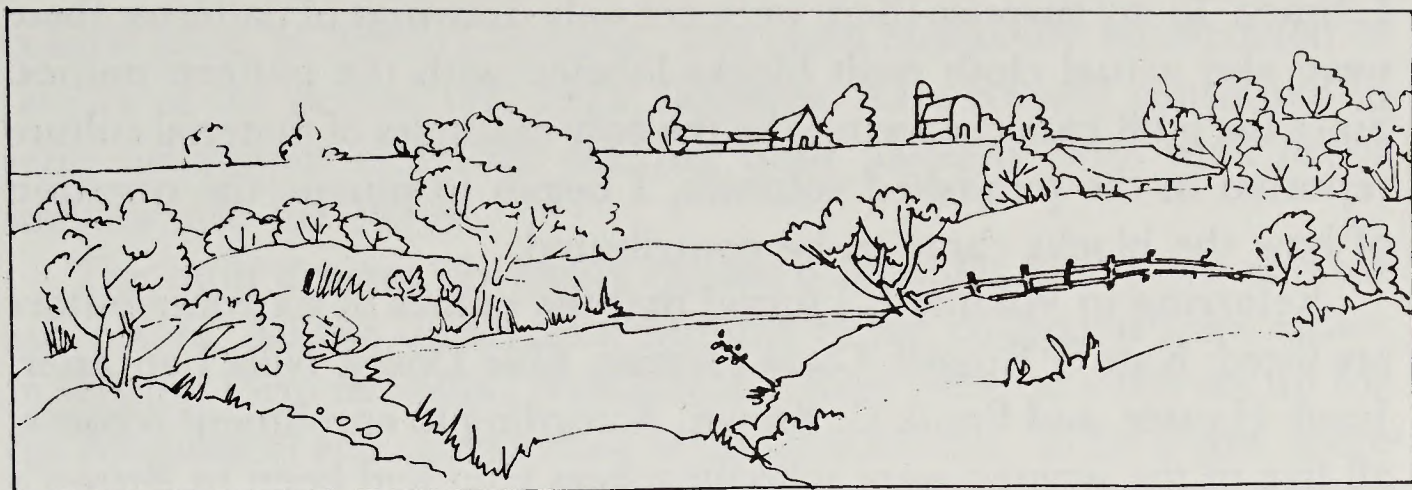
Quilt Patterns in the Frank C. Brown Collection,
Laurel Horton 3

Folklore and State History: An Annotated Bibliography of Folklore
and Folklife Material in the *North Carolina Historical Review*,
Camilla Collins 14

The Oral Life of the Written Ballad of *The Wanton Wife of Bath*,
Betsy Bowden 40

Cover: W. Amos “Doc” Abrams plays a music box from his collection of roller organs and other mechanical music contraptions. Dr. Abrams’s opening concert has been a tradition at annual meetings of the N.C. Folklore Society. Photograph by David Huntley.

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Quilt Patterns in the Frank C. Brown Collection

By Laurel Horton

The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore represents the most extensive published survey of the verbal lore of any state, the result of thirty years work by over 650 contributors. Under the direction of Secretary-Treasurer Frank C. Brown, an English professor on the faculty of Trinity College (now Duke University), members of the North Carolina Folklore Society began in 1913 to compile what they hoped would be a complete collection of what they perceived as disappearing folklore in the state. Decades later the project had amassed some 54,000 individual items, some handwritten on scraps of paper, others compiled into notebooks. Frank C. Brown organized the items into general categories, but at the time of his death in 1943, the monumental task of editing for publication still remained. Brown's colleague Newman Ivey White assumed the responsibility for the collection and supervised a team of editors until his death in 1948 when Paul Franklin Baum took over. The first volume appeared in 1952, and the seventh and last in 1964.

When I was beginning my research on North Carolina quilts in 1975, I found in Volume I of *The Brown Collection* a list of sixty-five quilt pattern names, arranged alphabetically, with the names of the contributors and brief bibliographic footnotes. At the time the pattern names alone were not useful to me out of context. Later I began to wonder in what form the pattern names had been collected, and supposing that there might indeed be drawings of patterns among the manuscripts, I visited the collection at Duke University's Perkins

Library. To my surprise there were not only drawings of patterns, there were also actual cloth quilt blocks labeled with the pattern names. Since the quilt patterns seem to be the only examples of material culture reported in the published volumes, I began to pursue the question of how the blocks came to be contributed.

Referring to Volume I, I found that the names of six contributors are listed: Kate S. Russell, Clara Hearne, Elsie Doxey, Nilla Lancaster, Jessie Hauser, and Frank C. Brown. According to enrollment records, all five of the women were schoolteachers who had been in Brown's folklore class in the summer of 1923. According to the summer school catalog that year "all applicants for admission must have completed a high school course" or apply with an elementary certificate and two or more years teaching experience. The catalog describes the courses as "designed to meet the needs of teachers who desire professional training and further academic instruction."

One of the available courses was "The Ballad and Other Folklore," taught by Frank C. Brown. The catalog description reads:

This course consists of an extensive study of the ballad and other ancient and modern folksongs and of the other fifteen kinds of folklore as found in North Carolina and other sections of America. Much of the material used in the course is in manuscript form, and still other material studied is that collected by the class during the year: thus the student gets training in collection and classifying songs and other forms of folklore. Each student is assisted in developing some subject pertaining, if possible, to conditions of his native county or section.

For some reason five young women in Brown's class that summer recognized the folkloric value of quilt patterns. Perhaps as schoolteachers they had visited in homes of their students and admired the quilts they saw there. Their interest seems to have centered on the design of the pattern. They submitted no entire quilts, nor even drawings which would indicate how the pattern blocks were put together. In some cases the blocks seem to have been removed from unquilted tops. In other cases the cloth blocks may have served as pattern references, to remind the maker how the pieces go together. The contributors made no mention of the quilting stitches. In several of their submissions they did note what colors had been used and whether plain or patterned fabric formed the original.

The patterns seem to have been contributed, not during the 1923 summer session, but later when the women had returned to their teaching jobs in Roanoke Rapids, Goldsboro, Poplar Branch, Roxboro, and Pfafftown, all smaller cities and towns in the Piedmont or

coastal plain of North Carolina. The cloth blocks are constructed of fabrics of the period 1910-1925; however, Kate Russell continued to send newspaper clippings offering quilt patterns from mail order sources into the 1930s.

The quilt designs obviously caused difficulties for Brown and his successors. All the other contributions to the collection were either in written form or sound recordings. There were no rules set up for the submission and categorizing of visual materials. To his credit, there is no indication that Brown discouraged the contributions of patterns, nor did he consider disregarding them. Instead he placed them in category #6, "Housewifery," and he, or a successor, assigned each a number, just as he did for each proverb or riddle.

Someone, perhaps Paul Brewster, who edited the Beliefs and Customs section of Volume I, dealt with the quilt patterns in a scholarly manner. He located the bibliographic materials available at that time and searched the pattern names. His primary resource books included Ruth Finley's 1929 *Old Patchwork Quilts and the Women Who Made Them*, Carrie Hall's 1935 *The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America*, and Marie Webster's 1915 work, *Quilts: Their Story and How to Make Them*. Arrangement in alphabetical order must have seemed logical; since the editors were compiling a collection of verbal lore, they reduced the quilt patterns to their verbal components. They probably did not consider printing line drawings or photographs of the patterns because the only illustrations in the published volumes are woodcuts commissioned from artist Clare Leighton.

Relying only on the pattern name in searching bibliographic references led to several problems for the editors. Two blocks, to which are pinned the label "design tag lost," are not represented at all in print. A search for analogs to a block labeled "Memorial Leaf" yielded nothing, but if the searcher had known to look for visually similar patterns, he would have found that the pattern is most often called "Maple Leaf." In other cases references were included to different patterns of the same name. Reviewing the published list alongside the original submissions indicates that the editor was a verbally oriented person dealing with materials very much outside his area of expertise.

The patterns that may have given the most difficulty are Kate Russell's newspaper clippings. In the 1920s and 1930s there were a number of syndicated columns in newspapers and magazines offering needlework patterns for sale by mail order. One of the most widely distributed companies in the thirties, the Old Chelsea Station Needlecraft Service, is still in operation. Patterns from this company

HOUSEWIFERY (Domestic Lore)
Designs for Quilting

Clara Hearne
(Chatham County)

Four Hands Around:

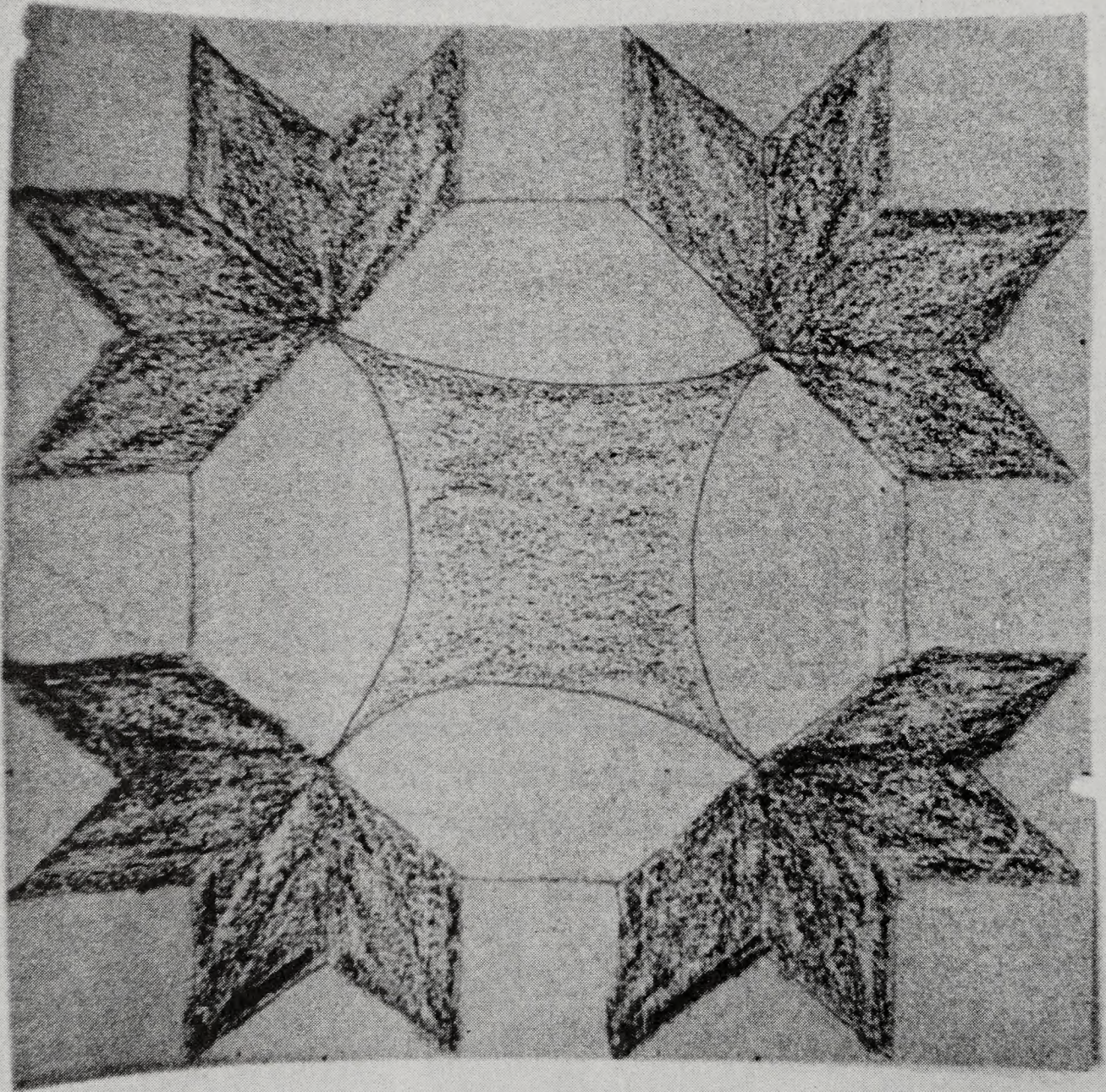
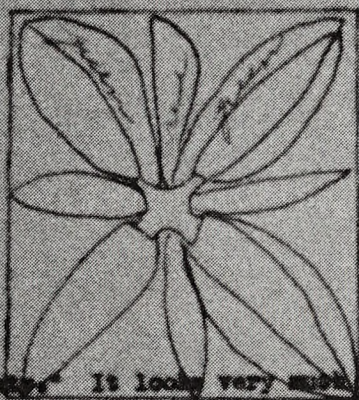


Figure 1. Clara Hearne submitted a crayon drawing for the quilt pattern "Four Hands Around" in yellow and green. The pattern was redrawn and attached to sheet of standard size paper so that it could be filed in the category "6f," under "Housewifery: designs for quilting, lacemaking, sewing, knitting."

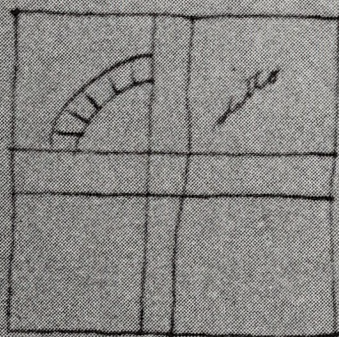
1888
Vol. 2, No. 1

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QUILT DESIGNS



The "Alabama Beauty." It looks very much like a tulip.



Another favorite was the "Georgia Fan."

Figure 2. The submissions "Alabama Beauty" and "Georgia Fan" were redrawn onto standard paper, but in the process the contributor's name was lost. "Alabama Beauty," described as looking "very much like a tulip" and drawn in red and green, appears to be a locally know applique design, similar to other nineteenth-century applique quilt patterns. The person who redrew the "Georgia Fan" entered the word "ditto" into a blank block to indicate repetition of the design. Unfamiliar with cataloging visual representations, the editors used devices associated with writing and print.

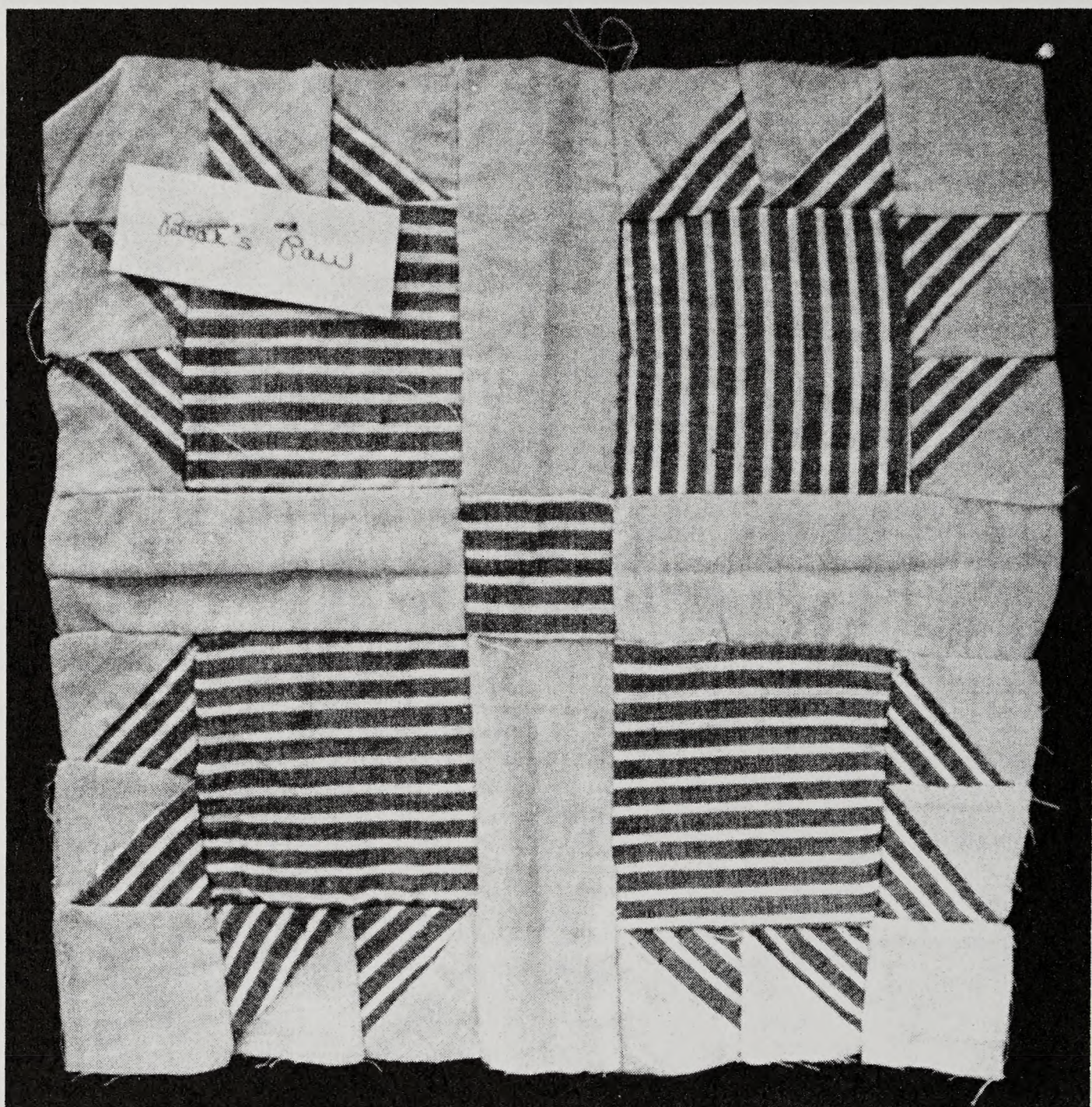


Figure 3. The "Bear's Paw," submitted by Nilla Lancaster, was a popular traditional pattern which was available as "Bear's Foot" through mail order from the Ladies Art Company after 1898.

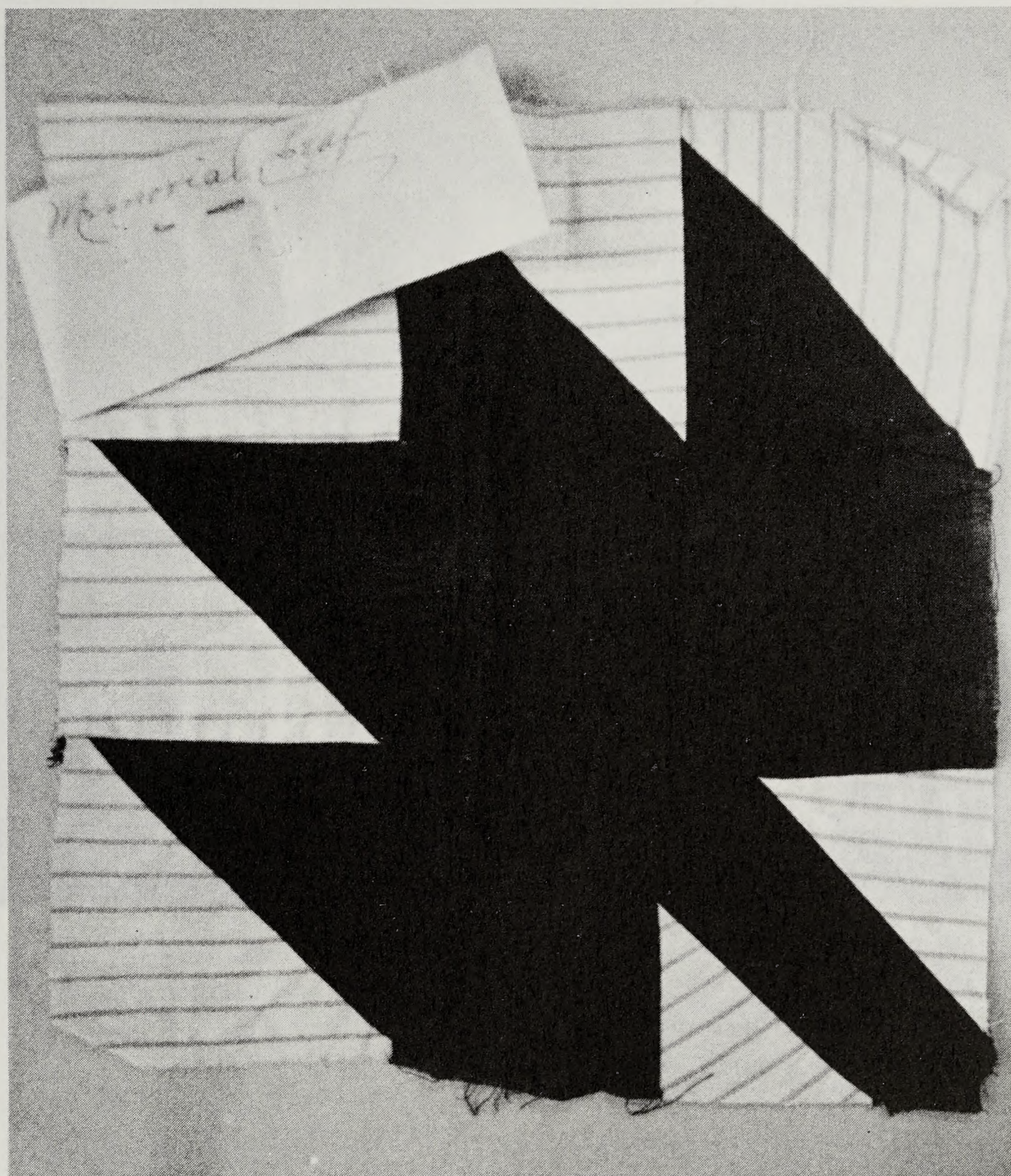


Figure 4. An unnamed contributor sent in this block, which is labeled "Memorial Leaf." The editors searched their references by title and were unable to locate it. However, if they had checked the pictures in their books, they would have found it as the well-known "Maple Leaf."

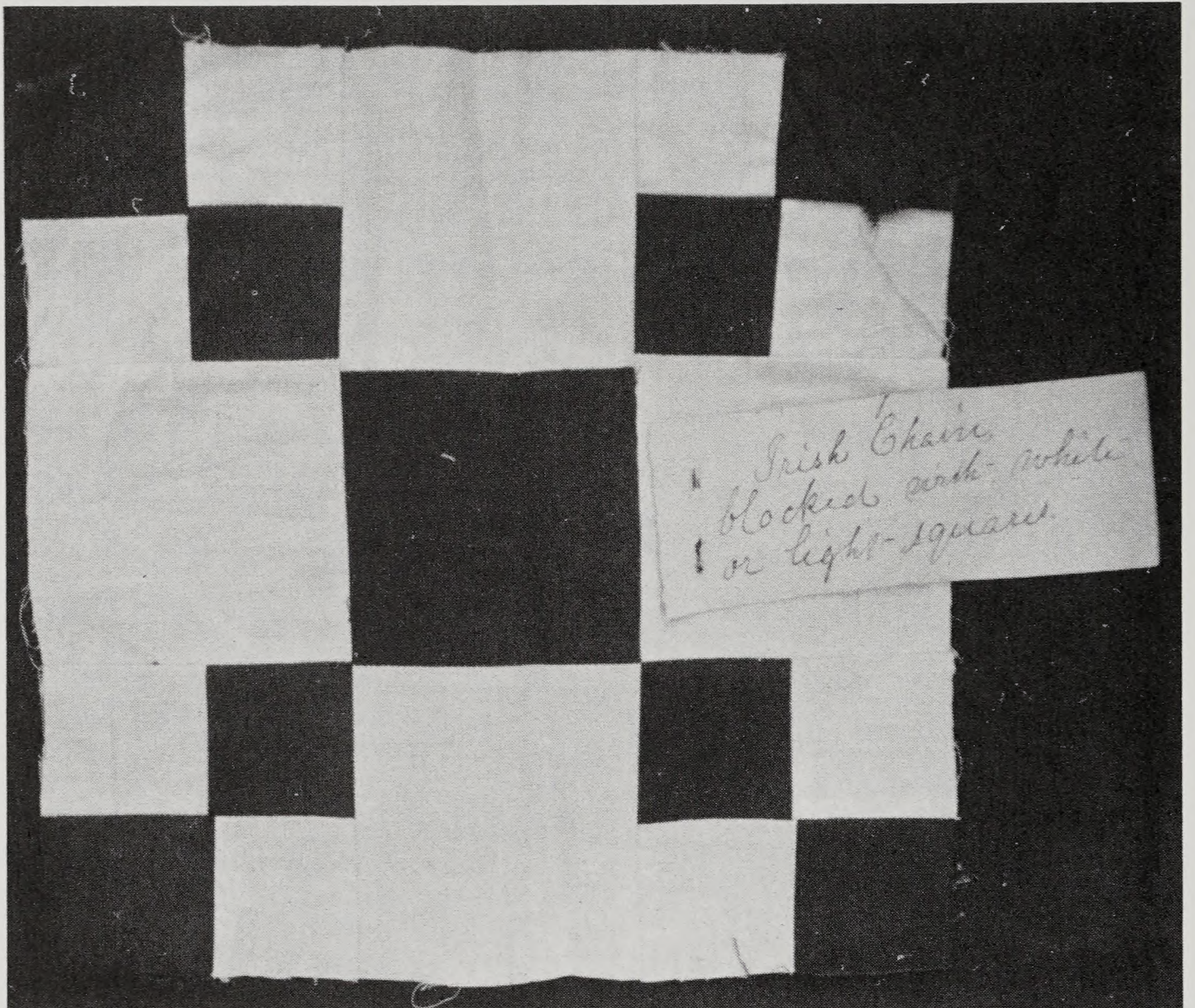


Figure 5. Clara Hearne submitted this red and white block labeled "Irish Chain, blocked with white or light squares." This is one variation of a very popular pattern in North Carolina.

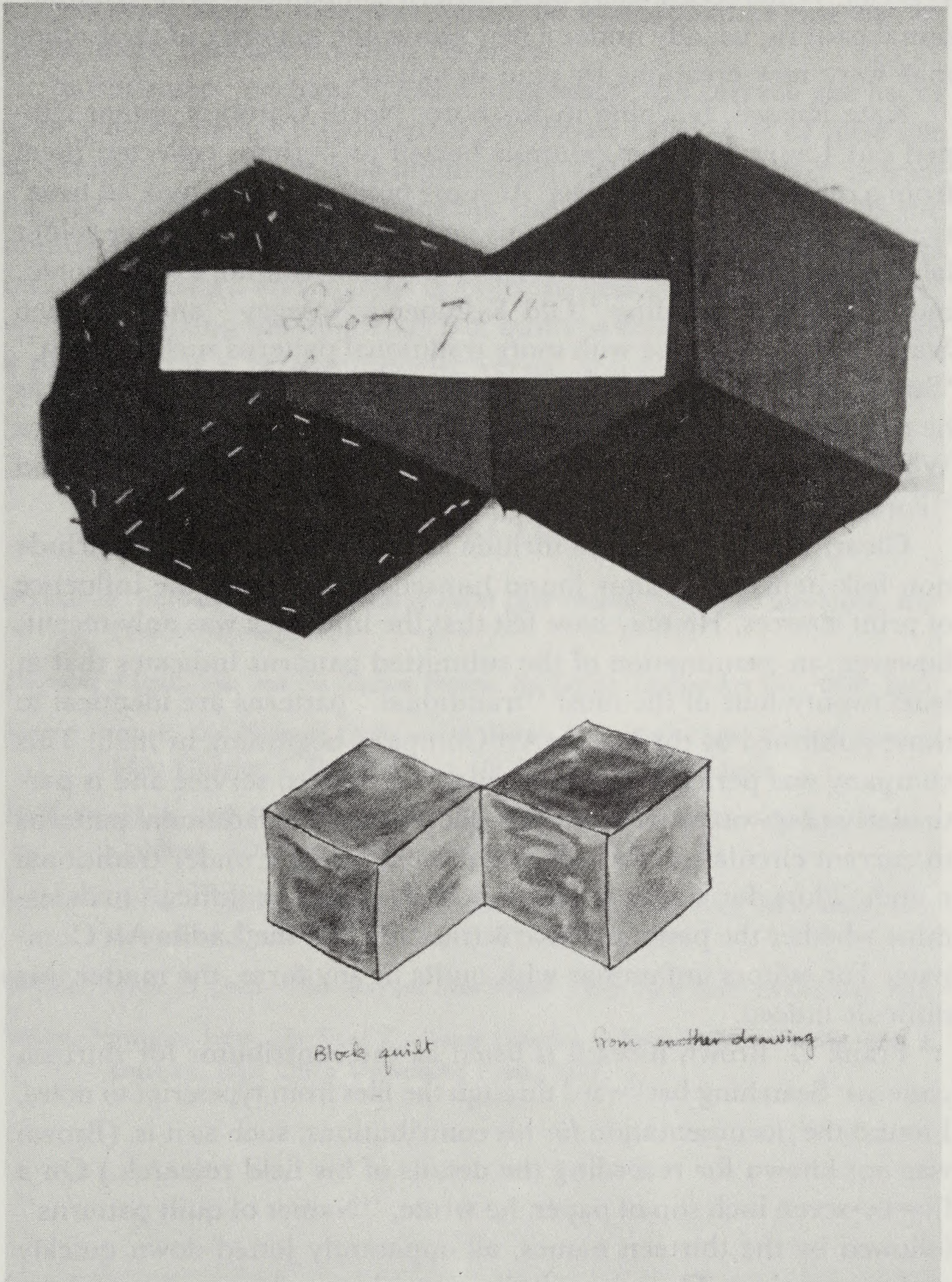


Figure 6. Two joined modules of the “Tumbling Blocks” pattern constructed over paper templates are labeled “Block quilt.” An editor reproduced the blocks in colored inks which approximate the red and black of the original, but he was unable to locate the pattern by name in published references. Consequently, this piece was not listed in the published list.

were offered under various names, including Alice Brooks and Laura Wheeler. While occasionally these pattern companies reprinted a traditional pattern, usually under a new name, the majority of their offerings were new creations by paid designers.

Kate Russell, teaching in Roxboro, North Carolina, either clipped out Laura Wheeler columns herself or perhaps collected them from a quiltmaker in her area. At some point an editor took all twenty or so of the submitted columns and placed them in a large folder labelled "Not of folk origin?" Yet by the time Volume I was printed, most of these, including "Old Fashioned Nosegay" and "Golden Stairs," are listed along with more traditional patterns such as "Fan," "Star," and "Basket." In an obvious attempt to eliminate patterns he thought of dubious folk origin, the editor eliminated eight Laura Wheeler designs including "Cowboy's Star," "Dutch Windmill," and "Forest Trail."

Clearly, in an attempt to include as much as possible but exclude non-folk items, the editor found himself dealing with the influence of print sources. He may have felt that the influence was only recent; however, an examination of the submitted patterns indicates that at least twenty-four of the most "traditional" patterns are identical to those published by the Ladies Art Company beginning in 1898. This company was perhaps the first mail order pattern service and is particularly noteworthy because it, in fact, collected traditional patterns in current circulation and reprinted them, usually under traditional names. Thus, for a quilt made after 1898, it may be difficult to determine whether the pattern source is traditional or the Ladies Art Company. For editors unfamiliar with quilts in any form, the matter was difficult indeed.

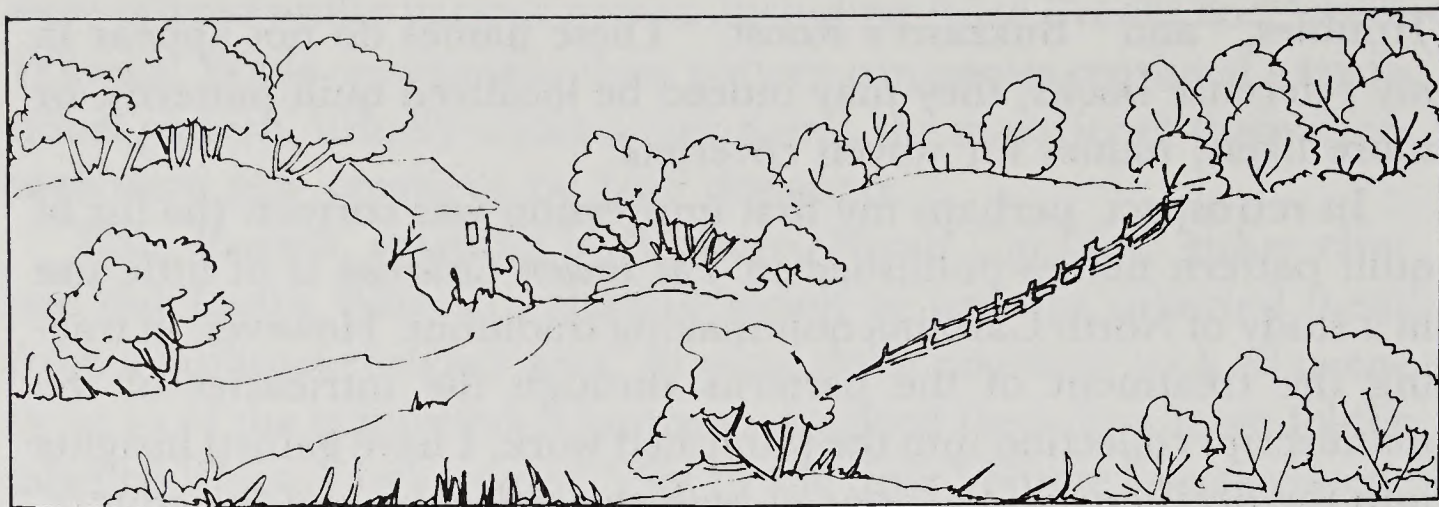
Frank C. Brown himself is listed as the contributor for thirteen patterns. Searching backward through the files from typescript to notes, I found the documentation for his contributions, such as it is. (Brown was not known for recording the details of his field research.) On a five-by-seven inch slip of paper, he wrote, "Names of quilt patterns" followed by the thirteen names, all apparently jotted down quickly at the same time. There is no indication where, when, or from whom he collected these names. I suspect he either recalled them from his own memory, or perhaps noted them as someone else recited them. In addition to familiar names such as "Wild Goose Chase" and "Log Cabin," he included some mysteries named "Strangers," "Widow's

Troubles,” and “Buzzard’s Roost.” These names do not appear in my reference books; they may indeed be localized quilt patterns, or more likely, names for woven coverlets.

In retrospect, perhaps my first impression was correct: the list of quilt pattern names published in *The Brown Collection* is of little use in a study of North Carolina quilting traditions. However, in tracing the treatment of the patterns through the intricacies of the manuscript collection into the published work, I have gained insights into the decisions and actions of both the collectors and the editors, who, recognizing the importance of quilts as folklore, strove to make a place for them in an otherwise verbal and musical collection.

WORKS CITED

- Brackman, Barbara. *An Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns*, Vols. 1-8. Lawrence, KS: Prairie Flower, 1979.
- Diagrams of Quilt, Sofa, and Pin Cushion Patterns*. St. Louis: Ladies Art Co., 1898, 1913.
- Finley, Ruth E. *Old Patchwork Quilts and the Women Who Made Them*. Newton Centre, MA: Charles T. Branford Co., 1970 reprint of 1929 book.
- Hall, Carrie A. and Rose Kretsinger. *The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America*. Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printer Ltd: 1935.
- Smith, Wilene. “Quilt Blocks, or Quilt Patterns?” in *Uncoverings*. Mill Valley CA: American Quilt Study Group, 1987, forthcoming.
- Webster, Marie D. *Quilts—Their Story and How to Make Them*. New York: Doubleday, 1915.
- White, Newman Ivey. *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*, Vol. 1. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1952.



**Folklore and State History:
An Annotated Bibliography of Folklore
and Folklife Material in the
*North Carolina Historical Review***

By Camilla A. Collins

For folklorists to be concerned with the relationship of history and folklore is nothing new. Richard M. Dorson is credited with establishing a scholarly basis for exploring the relationship between the two disciplines. His *American Folklore*, published in 1959, offers an unencumbered rendering of folklore's presences in various time periods of United States history. *America in Legend*, with its illustrations appealing to the general reader, expands the arguments of the earlier text and, reflecting Dorson's teaching stint in California, adds material on the drug culture of the 1960s. But these are only two of his works on the topic; others, including the essays collected in *American Folklore and the Historian*, are further discussions of the ties between the two subject matters and consistently make a case for his basic premise that the history of the United States and its folklore are inextricably bound.

Today this tie is best illustrated in *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* by Charles M. Joyner and by Joyner himself who has degrees in both disciplines. Another of Joyner's works, an essay chiefly presenting the merits and demerits of both the New Folkloristics and the New Social History, examines recent publications which focus on the history of early modern Europe. Calling for a reconsideration of relationships between history and folklore, Joyner concludes that "One can understand neither events nor structures, nor their interactions

with one another, without centering one's analysis on the attitudes and actions of real human beings, without whom there is neither history nor folklore.'"

With the growth of public sector folklore programs, there are many efforts underway to document, record, preserve, exhibit, present, and discuss the incredible variety of human beings and their folk cultures. Local museums, arts councils, libraries, historic sites, living history farms, schools, and state parks, for example, sponsor events and projects geared to enhance awareness of the richness and relevance of folk traditions. The meanings of the past and its lessons for the present as well as the future are common features of these public programs.

Following the same route as folklorists who enter public sector work because they find the academic world shrinking in employment opportunities, historians may now prepare themselves for jobs in public agencies by specializing in public history. This situation marks a newly-emerging relationship of folklore and history—one characterized by competition for similar, if not the same, opportunities in the public sector market. Just how this competition is developing may be seen in *Public History: An Introduction* edited by Barbara J. Howe and Emory L. Kemp. This group of essays not only illustrates that public historians have specialized training and unique qualifications but also shows that they are entering arenas not yet approached by folklorists. And folklorists should be concerned that, while there is an increase in the number of degree-granting programs in public history, most folklore programs still lack course work designed to prepare graduates for public sector employment.

But we should not allow the economic circumstances of this decade to divide the two disciplines because each in legitimate pursuits has turned to the public sector. In the 1980s both folklorists and historians have developed avenues for applying their skills and scholarship to reaching large numbers of people and helping them help themselves to a deeper appreciation of their own, and others' cultures. By working together whenever possible—co-ordinating projects, sharing research, sponsoring activities, and declining to disparage the other, folklorists and historians may define the relationship of their disciplines in new and innovative ways.

While pondering such thoughts and trying to explain them to students enrolled in my Applied Folklore class, I concluded that an examination of a state historical publication would no doubt yield

valuable information for a folklorist working in a public sector agency. Sometime later I chose to do such an examination myself to have examples for use in future classes. The *North Carolina Historical Review*, a publication in my native state and one I recalled from my undergraduate education in history, seemed an appropriate choice for my investigation. When my initial perusal of several volumes turned up a variety of information depicting aspects of culture and tradition which interest the folklore and folklife specialist, especially one charged with designing projects and programs which reflect or draw upon an area's history, I decided to examine the entire range of articles in the *North Carolina Historical Review*. I was curious about how much folklore-related material there might be in such a publication and what would be its major themes. This annotated bibliography is the result of my search through issues published from 1924 through 1986.

The folklore and folklife material in the *NCHR* primarily concerns material culture. There is information on topics such as architecture, agriculture, crafts, transportation, industry and occupations, and foodways. Celebrations and customs, household activities, social life, education, and religion are common themes in the articles while folk beliefs, legends, hunting tales, and other verbal genres are fairly scarce. African American and Native American cultures and history are occasional topics. My approach here is inclusionary rather than exclusionary; thus, as with architecture for example, I include material on historic site archaeology and restoration as well as early colonial houses, farmhouses, jails, and other public buildings. Certainly most of the articles written by and for historians do not focus on or treat folk traditions in ways we might prefer, but they do contain material we may not otherwise find easily accessible.

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- Howe, Barbara J., and Emory L. King, eds. *Public History: An Introduction*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 1986.
- Joyner, Charles M. *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984.
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Alcott, John V. "Architectural Development at 'Montrose' in the 1850's." 42 (January 1965): 85-95.

Seen through drawings and letters exchanged between William Alexander Graham, a former Governor of N.C., and Alexander Jackson Davis, N.Y. architect. Home destroyed by fire in 1862. Later, houses built on original site.

Atchison, Ray M. "The Land We Love: A Southern Post-Bellum Magazine of Agriculture, Literature, and Military History." 37 (October 1960): 506-515.

Magazine published 1866-1869 in Charlotte with General Daniel Harvey Hill as editor. Contents included poetry, fiction, literary criticism, biographical sketches, battle reports and statistics, war reminiscences, sketches of life in hospitals and in northern prisons, anecdotes of soldiers on march and in camp, essays on agriculture, education, travel, descriptive sketches of homesteads and counties, and general history. In April, 1869, moved to Baltimore and merged with the *New Eclectic Magazine*, later the *Southern Magazine*.

Bardolph, Richard. "A North Carolina Farm Journal of the Middle 'Fifties.'" 25 (January 1948): 57-89.

Discusses history and contents of the *Aerator* to suggest role of agriculture press in movement for farming progress in state and to view condition of state's agriculture on eve of Civil War. Includes information on restoration and preservation of soil fertility, fruit culture, livestock production, farm implements, recipes, hints on household tasks, and health and nursing instruction.

Berkeley, Edmund, and Dorothy S. "'The Manner of Living of the North Carolinians,' By Francis Veale, December 19, 1730." 41 (April 1964): 239-245.

Concerns four sheets and map found among papers of Peter Collinson, Quaker merchant and botanist, contained in his correspondence with John Clayton of Virginia. Reproduces manuscript which contains comments on land, animals, crops, manners, and religion in North Carolina in 1730.

Bishir, Catherine W. "Black Builders in Ante-bellum North Carolina." 51 (October 1984): 422-461.

Discusses role of slaves and free blacks in building trades, their skills as artisans, their training, participation with whites on construction crews, dealings with white society, and competition with white artisans.

_____. "The 'Unpainted Aristocracy': The Beach Cottages of Old Nags Head." 54 (October 1977): 367-392.

On early twentieth-century cottages, building materials, distinctive seaside architectural styles, and influence of S.J. Twine of Elizabeth City, who introduced large one-and-one-half story structures. Also includes information on social life, entertainment, transportation, and changes from summer village to resort area.

Bonner, James C., ed. "Plantation Experiences of a New York Woman." 38 (July 1956): 384-412.

Part I. Nineteen selected letters written by Sarah Francis Hicks from the eastern N.C. plantation where she settled with her husband, Benjamin Franklin Williams, in October, 1853. Detailed picture of southern social life and daily activities of a planter's wife.

_____. "Plantation Experiences of a New York Woman." 38 (October 1956): 529-546.

Part II. Twenty-one letters written by Sarah Francis Hicks, wife of Benjamin Franklin Williams, from a southeastern Georgia plantation where her husband's turpentine business took them in 1856. Further details of southern social life and daily activities of a planter's wife.

Breen, William J. "Southern Women in the War: The North Carolina Woman's Committee, 1917-1919." 55 (July 1978): 251-281.

Discusses problems and successes of the committee. Includes information on Food Administration Department's home demonstration efforts.

Bushong, William B. "William Percival, an English Architect in the Old North State, 1857-1860." 57 (July 1980): 310-339.

Surveys Percival's achievements in designing residences and public buildings as well as his use of construction materials and techniques.

Cappon, Lester J. "Iron-Making—A Forgotten Industry of North Carolina." 9 (October 1932): 331-348.

Covers operation of iron works during the Revolution, ore deposits and iron works opened in westward migration, extensive five family iron-making operations in Lincoln County, activity during the Civil War, and decline of the industry. Gives names and locations of iron works in the text.

Clifton, James M. "Golden Grains of White Rice Planting on the Lower Cape Fear." 50 (October 1973): 365-393.

On size of acreage, reclaiming tidal swamp, rice planting methods, crop season, harvesting methods, plantation hierarchy, facilities and buildings, and difficulties and development leading to decline of rice planting on Lower Cape Fear in 1890s.

_____. "A Half-Century of A Georgia Rice Plantation." 48:4 (October 1970): 388-415.

Based on plantation records and voluminous correspondence concerning plantation operations, view of Charles Manigault's "Gowrie" on Savannah River and Argyle Island, from mid 1830s to 1880s, and the planting methods, slavery practices, medicines and ailments of slaves, effects of Civil War, overseers, and eventual decline.

Clonts, F.W. "Travel and Transportation in Colonial North Carolina." 3 (January 1926): 16-35.

Information pertains only to Proprietary period. Describes and discusses craft used for transportation by water (small row boats, canoes, perriaugers, and sloops), conditions and building of roads, bridges, and ferries, and principal land routes.

Coe, Joffre L. "The Indian in North Carolina." 56 (April 1979): 158-161.

Brief commentary on Indian culture and life as reflected in various prehistoric archaeological periods in North Carolina.

Collins, Herbert. "The Idea of Cotton Textile Industry in the South, 1870-1900." 34 (July 1957): 358-392.

Contains comment on life of cotton millhands.

Coribitt, D.L., ed. "Letters from Hugh Luckey, Raleigh Hatter." 25 (April 1948): 179-192.

Includes eleven letters from Hugh Luckey to William Reid of Norfolk, Va., from whom he ordered his merchandise. Arrived in Raleigh on January 29, 1843, probably from Virginia, and ceased his business advertisements February 6, 1844, probably because he moved to another town. Letters reveal he was always behind in paying Reid, that he expanded his business by visiting nearby county seats during terms of court. Information about Raleigh and people living there.

Craig, Alberta Ratliffe. "Old Wentworth Sketches." 11 (July 1934): 185-204.

Concerns life in Wentworth, N.C., chiefly in the 1870s and 1880s. Remarks on methods of travel, harvesting ice from the pond, parties, citizens and buildings, churches, schools, Saturday town visitors, Blacks, a tournament, courtship notes, court week, the Teacher's Institute, and the hills around Wentworth.

Craig, Marjorie, ed. "Home-Life in Rockingham County in the 'Eighties and the 'Nineties." 33 (October 1956): 510-528.

Reminiscences written about 1935 by Alberta Ratliffe Craig of her life in Wentworth, N.C. Describes homestead, yard, flowers, fruit and other trees, baking bread, making soap, spring and fish ponds, hog killing, duties of the help, duties of the children, knitting and sewing, magazine subscriptions, weddings, and teaching experiences.

Crittenden, Charles Christopher. "Inland Navigation of North Carolina, 1763-1789." 8 (April 1931): 145-154.

Describes types of craft used on inland waterways, navigation methods, and improvements of the waterways.

_____. "Means of Communication in North Carolina, 1763-1789." 8 (October 1931): 373-383.

Explains system of special messengers, the development of a postal system before the Revolution, expansion of number of post offices and routes following the Revolution, and other sources of information such as newspapers and letters.

_____. "Overland Travel and Transportation in North Carolina, 1763-1789." 8 (July 1931): 239-257.

Describes roads and their conditions, difficulty in crossing rivers and sounds, use of bridges and ferries, private lodgings, ordinaries, inns, taverns, traveling by horseback, wagon, cart, carriage, and on foot.

_____. "Ships and Shipping in North Carolina, 1763-1789." 8 (January 1931): 1-13.

Discusses types of vessels, shipbuilding, influence of seafaring on inhabitants, ship wrecks, and passenger accommodations.

Davidson, Charlmers G. "Catawba Springs—Carolina's Spa." 28 (October 1951): 414-420.

Fashionable society resort in Lincoln County before Civil War. Discusses proprietors of the resort, notable visitors and names of their plantations. Ceased to exist when Civil War ended prospects of planter class who had patronized it.

Dill, Alonzo Thomas, Jr. "Eighteenth Century New Bern. A History of the Town and Craven County, 1700-1800. Part II, The Founding of New Bern." 22 (April 1945): 152-175.

Discusses early Swiss and German settlers. Information on first building structures, religion, crafts, governmental regulations, and farming.

_____. "Eighteenth Century New Bern. A History of the Town and Craven County, 1700-1800. Part IV, Years of Slow Development." 22 (October 1945): 460-489.

Describes the town and its buildings, streets, courthouse, and prison. Development of the county, of communications (roads, bridges, ferries), religious denominations, and professional occupations.

_____. "Eighteenth Century New Bern. A History of the Town and Craven County 1700-1800. Part V, Political and Commercial Rise of New Bern." 23 (January 1946): 47-78.

On courthouse construction, house construction, layout of town, trade exports, craftsmen and artisans, early industries.

_____. "Eighteenth Century New Bern. A History of the Town and Craven County, 1700-1800. Part VI, New Bern as Colonial Capital." 23 (April 1946): 142-171.

Deals with construction of brick courthouse, school and governor's palace.

_____. "Eighteenth Century New Bern. A History of the Town and Craven County, 1700-1800. Part VII, New Bern During the Revolution." 23 (July 1946): 325-359.

Treats collapse of British authority, changes in town life due to war, role as port for Continental army supplies, and trade items.

_____. "Eighteenth Century New Bern. A History of the Town and Craven County, 1700-1800. Part VIII, New Bern at Century's End." 23 (October 1946): 495-535.

Covers changes in newspaper, school, public buildings, the unoccupied governor's palace. Also discusses celebration of North Carolina's adoption of the Federal Constitution, traveler's impressions of New Bern, merchants and their shops, social activities, recreation, theater, literature, and men's associations.

_____. "Public Buildings in Craven County, 1722-1835." 20 (October 1943): 301-326.

Chiefly the history of various stages of construction of the courthouse and jail. Also information on construction of stocks, pillory, and whipping post.

_____. "Tryon's Palace—A Neglected Niche of North Carolina History." 19 (April 1942): 119-167.

Reviews events preceding construction of Palace, discusses in detail the architectural and historical importance of the building, calls for archaeological investigations of the site and hopes for eventual restoration of the Palace.

Eaton, Clement. "The Ebb of the Great Revival." 23 (January 1946): 1-12.

Concerned with certain significant by-products of Great Revival: 1) co-operation during period of various sects, later dissolved into bitter denominational fights, 2) ebb of revival movement as illustrated in career of Robert Hugg King, evangelist, 3) residual effects of evangelism upon Southern mind which resulted in placing taboo upon examining the mysteries of religion with a free mind.

Ferguson, Isabel. "County Court in Virginia, 1700-1830." 8 (January 1931): 14-40.

Briefly discusses county officers, court term, court jurisdiction. Discusses in detail the methods and measures reflecting the court's control of economic, social, and political life.

Finger, John R. "The Saga of Tsali: Legend Versus Reality." 56 (January 1979): 1-18.

Examines Tsali legend in light of historical evidence and concludes that accounts of his heroic resistance to removal of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians are partly factual and partly symbolic. Tsali is featured in the outdoor drama *Unto These Hills*, performed annually in Cherokee, NC.

Fink, Arthur E. "Changing Philosophies and Practices in North Carolina Orphanages." 48 (October 1971): 333-358.

General overview of apprenticeship system in colonial period and of orphanage as post-Civil War development. Specific information on educational, work, and religious programs, cooking and serving facilities; role of housemothers and other staff.

Flanders, Ralph B. "An Experiment in Louisiana Sugar, 1829-1833." 9 (April 1932): 153-162.

One effort of Farish Carter to operate a sugar plantation in Louisiana. Examines plantation records for information on plantation life, food and clothing, and expenses.

Franklin, W. Neil. "Agriculture in Colonial North Carolina." 3 (October 1926): 538-574.

Information on major crops, minor agricultural products, food and diet, raising hogs and cattle and poultry, and prices.

Fries, Adelaide L. "The Moravian Contribution to Colonial North Carolina." 7 (January 1930): 1-14.

Discusses the settlement at Wachovia, the activities of various craftsmen, trade, the grist mill, treatment of the Indians and education.

_____. "One Hundred Years of Textiles in Salem." 27 (January 1950): 1-19.

History of growth and variety of textiles in Salem from 1766-1866. Discusses individual weavers and women weavers in the Single Sisters House, organization and operation of Salem Cotton Manufacturing Company and its decline, the Francis Fries wool mill. Material gathered from journal, account books, and company minutes.

_____. "Travel Journey of Charles A. Van Vleck, 1826." 8 (April 1931): 187-206.

Reproduces journal describing travels from Salem, N.C. to Bethlehem, Pa. in October, 1826. Information on weather, lodgings, meals, costs, distance traveled each day, and encounters with people along the way.

Gass, W. Conrad. "A Felicitous Life: Lucy Martin Battle, 1805-1874." 52 (October 1975): 367-393.

Role of Battle as wife and manager of private affairs of family of prominent judge.

Her activities in family discipline, medical care, slave supervision, building construction, entertainment, food production and preparation, clothing and firewood supplies and religious life.

_____. " 'The Misfortune of a High Minded and Honorable Gentleman': W.W. Avery and the Southern Code of Honor." 56 (July 1979): 278-297.

On traditional attitudes requiring revenge when personal honor is offended. Avery, a lawyer who had offended him earlier. Avery was acquitted by the court.

Gay, Dorothy A. "Crisis of Identity: The Negro Community in Raleigh, 1890-1900." 50 (April 1973): 121-140.

Primarily based on material written by Blacks. Topics include political participation, education, occupations, newspapers, social organizations and events, churches, property and houses, diseases, accommodation strategies, and problems of identity and social organization.

Glass, Brent D. " 'Poor Men with Rude Machinery': The Formative Years of the Gold Hill Mining District, 1842-1853." 51 (January 1984): 1-35.

Includes discussion of both surface and shaft mining methods; role of local farmers and native gold hunters as well as role of Cornish miners and slaves; efforts of independent miners, partnerships, and companies; community, cultural, and political institutions.

Green, Fletcher M. "Gold Mining: A Forgotten Industry of Antebellum North Carolina, Part I." 14 (January 1937): 1-19.

Describes early mining operations, the gold rush period and regions, and mining towns and miners.

_____. "Gold Mining: A Forgotten Industry of Antebellum North Carolina, Part II." 14 (April 1937): 135-155.

On uses of the gold, establishment of a branch mint in Charlotte, N.C., mining methods, decline in mining by 1849, pre-civil War renewed interest in mining, influence of mining on people and the State, and relationship of mining and agriculture.

_____. "Listen to the Eagle Scream: One Hundred Years of the Fourth of July in North Carolina (1776-1876)." 31 (July 1954): 295-320.

Part I. Examines orations and toasts delivered at celebrations for public opinion and attitudes on major state, regional, and national problems of the day. Discusses form of celebrations, Moravian attitude toward celebrating, influence of Sunday school and temperance movement on celebration, describes July 4th in Charleston, S.C., in 1843, pattern of July 4th orations and various toasts.

_____. "Listen to the Eagle Scream: One Hundred Years of the Fourth of July in North Carolina (1776-1876)." 31 (October 1954): 529-549.

Part II. Toasts reflect national and state politics and problems. Celebrations discontinued during Civil War and then slowly resumed. Conclusion summarizes functions of July 4th with emphasis on toasts and orations.

Griffin, Richard W., and Diffie W. Standard. "The Cotton Textile Industry in Ante-Bellum North Carolina. Part II, and Era of Boom and Consolidation, 1830-1860." 34 (April 1957): 131-164.

On efforts to encourage growth of manufacturers, employees and managers, newspaper efforts to establish dignity of mill laborer and moral responsibility of owner, housing, and pride in regional independence.

_____. "Reconstruction of the North Carolina Textile Industry, 1865-1885." 41 (January 1964): 34-53.

Relates problems faced by mill owners who survived Civil War and shows that reconstruction of industry took place largely in areas where there had been strong development before Civil War. Appendix lists N.C. cotton mills operating between 1865 and 1964; name, location by county, dates, equipment, power source, product, employees and owners.

Guild, John C. "Simm's Views on National and Sectional Literature, 1825-1845." 34:3 (July 1957): 393-405.

Presents William Gilmore Simms efforts as editor of *Magnolia* and *Southern and Western* to encourage Southern writers in creating distinctive Southern literature.

Hamer, Marguerite B. "The Foundation and Failure of the Silk Industry in Provincial Georgia." 12 (April 1935): 125-148.

Begun in area south of Savannah River as effort by England to produce her own silk in the colonies rather than depend on Italian market. Settled people in the area on condition that they plant mulberry trees. Describes initial favorable results in silk production and eventual failure due to climate, inadequate equipment, labor problems, poor management, and financial problems.

_____. "Thomas Hughes and His American Rugby." 5 (October 1928): 390-412.

Hughes established a colony for young Englishmen in the Cumberland Plateau area of Tennessee in 1880. Dealing with choice of site, manning of site, hotel keeping, building operations, farming, drying and canning industry, social life, the library, the church, the cemetery, and eventual decline of Rugby.

Harper, C.W. "House Servants and Field Hands: Fragmentation in the Ante-bellum Slave Community." 55 (January 1978): 42-59.

Contrasts occupational distinctions between house servants and field hands, their

appearance and bearing, their food and clothing, their relationship to owners and their attitudes about runaways. Shows house servants, frequently mulattoes, had superior situation in slave system.

Harrington, J.C. "Archeological Explorations at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site." 26 (April 1949): 127-149.

General summary of results from excavations during springs of 1947 and 1948 with regard to site of fort built in 1585 and site of nearby village. Established identity, type of construction, and plan of Ralph Lane's fort and strongly suggests village located west of fort. Found that large part of original fort is left in the ground.

_____. "The Manufacture and Use of Bricks at the Raleigh Settlement on Roanoke Island." 44 (January 1967): 1-17.

Reviews building practices in rural Elizabethan England and how houses were built in other early colonies, especially at Jamestown. Discusses archaeological explorations at Fort Raleigh and bricks found. Concludes that bricks were made by Raleigh colonists but not for construction purposes, that they possessed roofing tiles presumably brought from England.

Heisner, Beverly. "Harriet Morrison Irwin's Hexagonal House: An Invention to Improve Domestic Dwellings." 58 (April 1981): 105-124.

On the childhood, education, marriage, and child-rearing successes of a woman who wrote newspaper articles and a novel and who in 1869 was the first woman to patent an architectural design.

Hilldrup, R.L. "The Salt Supply of North Carolina During the American Revolution." 22 (October 1945): 393-417.

Information on the promotion of salt manufacturing, on location of salt works, and on sources of military and civilian salt supplies.

Holder, Edward M. "Social Life of the Early Moravians in North Carolina." 11 (July 1934): 147-184.

Concerns features of the early Moravian social life—the choir system, marriage, strict discipline, education, health care, protection of property, and treatment of visitors. Also discusses relationship of Moravians to other people.

Inscoe, John C. "Mountain Masters: Slaveholding in Western North Carolina." 51 (April 1984): 143-173.

On extent and effect of slave labor system in mountain counties of Western North Carolina. Discusses business interests of slaveholders, agricultural and livestock production, and use of slaves in hotel keeping, manufacturing and mercantile efforts, mining and railroad construction.

Johnson, Guion Griffis. "The Ante-Bellum Town in North Carolina." 5 (October 1928): 372-389.

Describes location and size of towns, town government, functions of the town commission, the town market and hall, observances of special occasions, public hangings, and celebrations of national holidays.

_____. "Courtship and Marriage Customs in Ante-Bellum North Carolina." 8 (October 1931): 384-402.

Discusses parental consent for courtship, courtship customs, the coquette, illegitimacy, engagement, and marriage ceremony.

_____. "Recreational and Cultural Activities in the Ante-Bellum Town of North Carolina." 6 (January 1929): 15-37.

Deals with public social centers, private school activities, town clubs, sports, and summer resorts.

_____. "Social Characteristics of Ante-Bellum North Carolina." 6 (April 1929): 140-157.

Covers characteristics of individualism, conservatism, sectionalism, provincialism and superstition. Gives numerous examples of each. In regards to superstition, discusses belief in witchcraft, power of breaking spells, faith in signs, and other beliefs.

Jones, Thomas B. "Calvin Jones, M.D.: A Case Study in the Practice of Early American Medicine." 48 (January 1972): 56-71.

Presents Jones (1775-1846) as bridge between speculative and modern pathology, as physician often mixing folk remedies with attempts to maintain scientific standards. On smallpox, cataract cases, bleeding, blistering, use of stimulants, concept of "excitability" as essential to good health.

Kay, Marvin L. Michael, and William S. Price, Jr. "'To Ride the Wood Mare': Road Building and Militia Service in Colonial North Carolina, 1740-1775." 57 (October 1980): 361-409.

Shows how socio-economic classes were reflected in road building and militia programs with upper classes administering and lower classes performing menial tasks and labor. Presents structure and sites involved in road building and militia programs.

Keith, Alice Barnwell. "William Maclean's Travel Journal from Lincolnton, North Carolina to Nashville, Tennessee, May-June, 1811." 15 (October 1938): 378-388.

Reproduces journal kept by Maclean who traveled to Tennessee to supervise re-survey of his land holdings. Journal presents day by day account of his journey by horseback and contains descriptions of inns, people, his own experiences, and scattered remarks on people's health.

Knapp, Richard F. "Golden Promise in the Piedmont: The Story of John Reed's Mine." 52 (January 1975): 1-19.

Concerns development of Reed Gold Mine in Cabarrus County during first half of 19th century. Includes detailed description of mining techniques and equipment.

Lathrop, Barnes F., ed. "A Southern Girl at Saratoga Springs, 1834." 15 (April 1938): 159-161.

Reprints letter by Eliza Thompson to her sister depicting her journey to Saratoga Springs and her stay there.

Lee, Lawrence, Jr. "Old Brunswick, The Story of a Colonial Town." 29 (April 1952): 230-245.

On growth of village, religion, early settlers, effect of Revolution, English pillage parties and disintegration of the town. Calls for archaeological investigation to discover form and layout of colonial village, foundations of buildings, nature of their construction, and artifacts.

Lemmon, Sarah McCulloh. "Transportation in the Twentieth Century—A Historical Memoir." 56 (April 1979): 194-201.

Covers horse and buggy, Model T, Model A, passenger train, airplane, and space travel.

Lindren, W.H., III. "Agricultural Propaganda in Lawson's A New Voyage to Carolina." 49 (October 1972): 333-344.

Published in 1709 and again in 1714 as the *History of Carolina*, Lawson's work exaggerated agricultural reports in keeping with late 17th and early 18th century promotional literature. Examines in particular his information on wheat, corn, and rice. Also includes brief discussion of his accounts of spectral ship, "Divel-Fish," and beasts and birds.

Logan, Frenise A. "The Colored Industrial Association of North Carolina and Its Fair of 1886." 34 (January 1957): 58-67.

Describes organization and opening ceremonies and mentions exhibits including needlework, quilts, decorative household work, stock, poultry, and crops.

Lounsbury, Carl. "The Building Process in Ante-bellum North Carolina." 60 (October 1983): 431-456.

On four stages or levels of complexity, existing simultaneously in most areas: 1) structures in initial settlements erected by self-sufficient builders; 2) trained craftsmen used for selected tasks; 3) master builder's advice and plans relied upon by prosperous farmers; 4) traditional regional forms supplanted by academic forms of architects and architectural pattern books.

_____. "The Development of Domestic Architecture in the Albemarle Region." 54 (January 1977): 17-48.

Focuses on structural characteristics of farmhouses in counties of Gates, Perquimans, and Pasquotank prior to 1860. Includes one-room, shed additions, double-pile, two-story, and side-passage.

Loving, Jerome M., ed. "Civil War Letters of George Washington Whitman from North Carolina." 50 (January 1973): 73-92.

Eight letters sent from North Carolina to his mother in New York in 1862. In addition to information on the fighting, letters contain data on food, clothing, buildings, terrain, weather, and pay.

Lyon, Ralph M. "Moses Waddel and the Willington Academy." 8 (July 1931): 284-299.

Reviews life of Moses Waddel and his operation of Willington Academy in Abbeville District, South Carolina. Discusses system of student monitors, curriculum, life at the academy, recreation, commencement, and lists some distinguished graduates.

Magoffin, Dorothy Seay. "A Georgia Planter and His Plantations, 1837-1861." 15 (October 1938): 354-377.

Views social and economic life from records and letters of George Jones Kollock of Savannah, Georgia. Deals with his education, marriages, summer mountain home, and sports interests. Discusses sections in plantation record books on Names and Rates of Hands, Births and Deaths, List of Sick, Allowances, Articles Delivered and Articles Received, General Statement of Work, and Daily Record of Employment. Records were first kept by Kollock, later by a succession of overseers.

Malone, E.T., Jr. "The University of North Carolina in Edwin Fuller's Novel, *Sea-Gift*." 3 (July 1976): 288-302.

On novel's discussion of all aspects of university life, including hazing, pranks and legends.

Massey, Mary Elizabeth. "Southern Refugee Life During the Civil War, Part I." 20 (January 1943): 1-21.

Covers causes of flight, individual and mass flights, means of transportation, places of refuge, and destruction of abandoned property. Sources largely include diaries and journals kept by refugees.

_____. "Southern Refugee Life During the Civil War, Part II." 20 (April 1943): 132-156.

Kind treatment of refugees, their diet, kinds of clothes, types of housing, effects on social life, church services as social occasions, reading and storytelling, starvation parties, weddings, and individual leisure time activities.

McDaniel, Ruth Cyrie. "Courtship and Marriage in the Nineteenth Century: Albion and Emma Tourgee, a Case Study." 51 (July 1984): 285-310.

Shows double standard for women and men with emphasis on education, social life, friendships, political activities, business efforts, and writing and creative pursuits.

McLean, Robert C., ed. "A Yankee Tutor in the Old South." 47 (January 1970): 51-85.

Introduces and reprints journal of Samuel Huntington Perkins written October 12 to November 22, 1817, recording his journey from Windham, Connecticut, to Mattamuskeet in Hyde County, North Carolina, and from March, 1818, to January 8, 1832, containing his impressions of southerners and their institutions. Perkins served as tutor to children of Dr. Hugh Jones on Lake Landing plantation in Hyde County. Includes comments on women, court sessions, dress, militia, treatment of slaves, farming, illnesses, and climate.

McMath, Robert C., Jr. "Agrarian Protest at the Forks of the Creek: Three Subordinate Farmers' Alliances in North Carolina." 51 (January 1974): 41-63.

Compares three sub-alliances in the Piedmont, their leaders, members, secret meetings, initiation ceremonies, meeting rituals, and social activities such as picnics, rallies, and barbecues.

Menius, Arthur C., III. "James Bennitt: Portrait of an Ante-bellum Yeoman." 58 (October 1981): 305-326.

Based on Bennitt's personal papers and presents information on variety of aspects of life of a yeoman farmer: accumulation of land and buildings, farm tools and implements, commercial endeavors of making and selling shoes and clothing, crop and livestock production, use of hired labor, reading materials, and effects of Civil War on family and farm productivity.

Moody, Robert Earle, and Charles Christopher Crittenden, eds. "The Letter-Book of Mills and Hicks (Nathaniel Mills and John Hicks), August 13th, 1781 to August 22nd, 1784, at Charles Town (South Carolina), Saint Augustine (East Florida), New York (New York), and Granville (Nova Scotia)." 14 (January 1937): 39-83.

Reproduces letters by Mills and Hicks, loyalist printers and merchants. Letters provide information on their lives, their occupations, and, in general, on 18th century trading techniques, particularly during the Revolution.

Moor, Marie D., comp. "Selected Bibliography of Completed Theses and Dissertations Related to North Carolina Subjects, 1974-1978." 51 (January 1979): 64-107.

An initial installment in an attempt to compile a comprehensive listing of completed theses and dissertations on North Carolina subjects. Sections on anthropology and archaeology, architecture, art, economics, education, folklore, geography, history, home economics, journalism, literature, music, political science, psychology, religion, sociology, and speech.

Morris, Francis Grave, and Phyllis Mary Morris. "Economic Conditions in North Carolina About 1700. Part I, Landholdings." 16 (April 1939): 107-133.

Reviews in detail county tax lists from 1777 to 1783 for information about land and slave holdings.

_____. "Economic Conditions in North Carolina About 1700. Part II, Ownership of Town Lots, Slaves, and Cattle." 16 (July 1939): 296-327.

Information obtained from county tax records from 1777 to 1783 on number and size of town lots, on slave owners and their holdings, and on cattle owners and their holdings. Includes maps and tables.

Newsome, A.R., ed. "The A.S. Merrimon Journal, 1853-1854." 8 (July 1931): 300-330.

Reproduces journal kept by Merrimon, a lawyer, from October 10, 1843, to January 28, 1854, of his practice in the superior and county courts, of people and the area, and of his travels to various courts.

_____. "A Miscellany from the Thomas Henderson Letter Book, 1810-1811." 6 (October 1929): 398-410.

Reproduces an assortment of articles by various authors contained in the manuscript collection. Includes a description of Beaufort, dated 1810, of Chatham County mines and quarries, dated 1811, of Liberty Hall Academy in Mecklenburg County, not dated, and several small articles.

_____. "John Brown's Journal of Travel in Western North Carolina in 1795." 11 (October 1934): 284-313.

Reproduces journal which reveals social and economic conditions in area of Salisbury, Statesville, Wilkesboro, Morganton, and Asheville in 1795. Brown was an agent for land investors.

_____. "Twelve North Carolina Counties in 1810-1811, Part I." 5 (October 1928): 413-446.

Introduction provides known history of the Thomas Henderson Letter Book, 1810-1811, a manuscript collection of descriptions of twelve N.C. counties. These descriptions written by people familiar with the counties at request of *The Star*, a weekly newspaper edited by Thomas Henderson from 1808-1815. Includes letter by Henderson requesting information and listing topics to be covered. Reproduces descriptions of Ashe, Caswell, and Duplin counties which contain historical, cultural, social, economic, and geographical information.

_____. "Twelve North Carolina Counties in 1810-1811, Part II." 6 (January 1929): 67-99.

Reproduces detailed description from the Thomas Henderson Letter Book, 1810-1811 of Edgecombe County.

_____. "Twelve North Carolina Counties in 1810-1811, Part III." 6 (April 1929): 171-189.

Reproduces descriptions from the Thomas Henderson Letter Book, 1810-1811, of Franklin, Greene, and Lenoir counties.

_____. "Twelve North Carolina Counties in 1810-1811, Part IV." 6 (July 1929): 281-309.

Reproduces descriptions from the Thomas Henderson Letter Book, 1810-1811, of Moore, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, and Wayne counties.

Parker, Robert J. "A Yankee in North Carolina: Observations of Thomas Oliver Larkin, 1821-1826." 14 (October 1937): 325-342.

Summarizes and surveys contents of Larkin's manuscript containing his observations and experiences. Information on his business venture in Wilmington, N.C., social life, customs, politics, sports, county people, courts and court cases, and description of Wilmington.

Parramore, Thomas C. "The 'Country Distemper' in Colonial North Carolina." 48 (January 1971): 44-52.

Considers extent to which yaws was a serious health problem, distinguishes yaws and endemic syphilis, relates both diseases to living conditions and diet, and discusses folk medicinal treatments for yaws.

Patton, James W. "Glimpses of North Carolina in the Writings of Northern and Foreign Travelers, 1783-1860." 45 (July 1968): 298-323.

Discusses motives and routes of travelers. Writings include physical descriptions, discussion of discomforts of journeys and accommodations, comments on gambling, drinking, and food habits. Lengthy quotes from writings, particularly those of Fanny Kemble and Mrs. Anne Royall.

Peebles, Minnie D. "Black Genealogy." 55 (April 1978): 164-173.

Deals with using both public and private records to trace family history of free Blacks as well as slaves.

Phifer, Edward W., Jr. "Religion in the Raw: Cyclone Mack in Burke County, August-September, 1920." 48 (July 1971): 225-244.

On Baxter Franklin McLendon, his background, his physical appearance, his sermon style and content, his community support, and his religious campaign in Morganton, August 15 to September 12, 1920.

Phillips, Ulrich B. "An Antiqua Plantation, 1769-1818." 3 (July 1926): 439-445.

An account of a sugar plantation in the West Indies based on analysis of manuscript account books. Covers topics such as acreage, number of slaves, animals, tools and equipment, crops, earnings, and expenditures.

Porter, Charles W., III. "Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, North Carolina: Part of the Settlement Sites of Sir Walter Raleigh's Colonies of 1585-1586 and 1587." 20 (January 1943): 22-42.

Briefly discusses Fort Raleigh and houses of early colonists.

Porter, Patrick G. "Advertising in the Early Cigarette Industry: W. Duke, Sons & Company of Durham." 48 (January 1971): 31-43.

Themes used in small paper cards placed in packages of cigarettes in 1880s included sex appeal, "actresses," "Gems of Beauty," sea captains, "50 Scenes of Perilous Occupations," various Civil War battle scenes. Other advertising devices were chairs with "Cameo" brand ads on the back placed in tobacco shops.

Powell, William S. "Creatures of Carolina from Roanoke Island to Purgatory Mountain." 50 (April 1973): 155-168.

Concerns references to animals in early records of N.C.: wildlife, fish, insects, panthers, bears, wolves, skunks, alligators, bullfrogs. Also includes comments on wild animal and hunting tales in N.C. folklore.

_____. "Tryon's 'Book' on North Carolina." 34:3 (July 1975): 406-415.

Reprints forty-four page manuscript letter by Governor William Tryon to his nephew, Sewallis Shirley, on July 26, 1765. Subjects include architecture, foodways, crops, tools and implements, illnesses, climate, slavery, and weather.

Prioli, Carmine Andrew. "The Indian 'Princess' and the Architect: Origin of a North Carolina Legend." 60 (July 1983): 283-303.

Discusses meeting, secret marriage, public marriage, family and business matters and untimely deaths of Rachel Blythe, of Cherokee heritage, and Adolphus Gustavus Bauer, of German heritage. Couple defied North Carolina law against interracial marriage; their life and deaths supply elements for legend perpetrated by the memorial Bauer designed for his wife.

Raper, Horace W., ed. "Accounts of Moravian Mountain Excursions of a Hundred Years Ago." 47 (July 1970): 281-316.

Reproductions of diary kept by Cynthia Thomas on four trips taken by Rough and Ready Mountain Club of Salem into western North Carolina and Virginia. Entries contain information on geographical landmarks, traveling conditions, food, campsites, and evening entertainment.

Reed, John Shelton. "Life and Leisure in the New South." 60 (April 1983): 172-182.

Examines stereotypes of Southerners as lazy.

Reilly, John G. "Tyson & Jones Buggy Company: The History of a Southern Carriage Works." 47 (July 1969): 201-213.

Deals with the beginnings of the business in 1856 in Carthage, Moore County, rebuilding after the Civil War, growth of business, enlargement and additions of the physical plant, advertising, and decline after 1924 due to the automobile. Includes picture of the factory and two buggy models.

Rights, Rev. Douglas L. "Traces of the Indian in Piedmont North Carolina." 1 (July 1924): 277-288.

Generally discusses areas inhabited by Indians, kinds of Indian relics, and arrows and arrow making.

Rippy, J. Fred. "A View of the Carolinas in 1782." 6 (October 1929): 362-370.

Summaries of sections of Francisco de Miranda's *Diary* which concern North and South Carolina. Describes New Bern, country surrounding New Bern, Beaufort, Wilmington, Georgetown, and Charleston and includes remarks on people, dwellings, pests and diseases, and recreations.

Rives, Ralph Hardee. "Panacea Springs: Fashionable Spa." 42 (October 1965): 430-439.

Discusses hospitality, entertainments, hotel structure, changes in managers, and decline after World War I of spa located three miles from Littleton, near boundary line between Warren and Halifax counties. When hotel was torn down during World War I, wood was used in small residences in nearby town.

Robert, Joseph Clarke. "The Tobacco Industry in Ante-Bellum North Carolina." 15 (April 1938): 119-130.

Concerns origins and characteristics of tobacco industry, tobacco factories and manufacturers, markets, and tobacco peddlers.

Roberts, B.W.C. "Cockfighting: An Early Entertainment in North Carolina." 42 (July 1965): 306-314.

Discusses the season (Thanksgiving to July 4th), main pit, conditioning and skills, and popularity in various parts of state. Describes typical cockfight. Popularity peak during last half of 19th century; now illegal.

Ruffin, Mrs. Kirkland, ed. "School-Boy Letters of Edmund Ruffin, Jr. 1828-1829." 10 (October 1933): 287-329.

Reprints twenty-seven letters written by fourteen-year-old boy from a school in New Haven, Connecticut, to his family in Virginia. Describes his life and experiences in school.

Simpson, Marcus B., Jr., and Sallie W. Simpson. "The Reverend John Clayton's Letters to the Royal Society of London, 1693-1694: An Important Source for Dr. John Brickell's *Natural History of North Carolina*, 1737." 54 (January 1977): 1-16.

Compares passages written by Clayton and Brickell. Includes comments on medical practices and beliefs associated with snakes and birds.

Souther, Stanley A. "'Russellborough': Two Royal Governor's mansions at Brunswick Town." 44 (October 1967): 360-372.

On construction and occupation of mansion from 1758 to 1776 by Governor Arthur Dobbs and Governor William Tryon. Destroyed by fire during occupancy of William Dry. Reviews artifacts and construction details discovered by excavation begun in May, 1966.

_____. "Searching for Clues to History through Historic Site Archeology." 43 (April 1966): 166-173.

Uses archives for historical information and then employs that information at site to discover details not found in archives. Discusses use of archaeology at site of Moravian settlement of Bethabara, at town of Brunswick, and in helping local groups planning restoration projects.

Spruill, Julia Cherry. "Southern Housewives Before the Revolution." 13 (January 1936): 25-46.

Describes and contrasts lives of housewives on large plantations and wives in back country settlements. Discusses their preparation and serving of food, furnishings and equipment, sources of and making of clothing and household linen, and keeping gardens.

_____. "Virginian and Carolina Homes Before the Revolution." 12 (October 1935): 320-340.

Discusses household and kitchen furnishings, building and construction materials, several large plantation homes, their furniture and furnishings, and a typical backwoods home.

Standard, Diffie W., and Richard W. Griffin. "The Cotton Textile Industry in Ante-Bellum North Carolina, Part I." 34:1 (January 1957): 15-35.

Covers origin and growth to 1830, ranging from first mill in Lincoln County in 1814 to establishment of five mills in 1828.

Starling, Robert B. "The Plank Road Movement in North Carolina, Part I." 16 (January 1939): 1-22.

Deals with various plank roads, company charters, costs and construction of Fayetteville and Western Plank road.

_____. "The Plank Road Movement in North Carolina, Part II." 16 (April 1939): 147-173.

Concerns various plank roads, management of plank road companies and tolls. Movement declined due to maintenance expenses, Civil War, railroad competitions, and price increases in lumber and labor. Includes map of established and incomplete plank roads.

Steelman, Lala Carr. "The Life-Style of an Eastern North Carolina Planter: Elias Carr of Bracebridge Hall." 57 (Winter 1980): 17-42.

On house form and furnishings, other structures and outbuildings, crops, hired laborers, farm management practices, wife's household management, education, and religious and social interests.

Stephenson, Shelby. "Folk Imagination and Music in Paul Green's Early Dramas." 60 (April 1983): 193-204.

Considers Green's use of folk belief, ballads, blues, spirituals, folk speech, ritual, folk medicine, and other elements of folk tradition.

Stephenson, William E. "The Davises, the Southalls, and the Founding of Wesleyan Female College, 1854-1849." 57 (July 1980): 257-279.

Discusses architecture, landscaping, curriculum, social training, social occasions, illnesses, sexual mores, teachers' duties, and responsibilities of Reverend Mr. Joseph H. Davis and Anne Davis, his wife, who ran the school during its earliest years. Eventual conflict with John Wesley Southall, president of the trustees, and his relatives led to Davis' resignation in 1859.

_____. "How Sallie Southall Cotton Brought North Carolina to the Chicago World's Fair of 1893." 58 (October 1981): 364-383.

Details Cotton's work throughout North Carolina and in Chicago to include her state in the Chicago World's Fair. Shows how she learned from her fund-raising and representational efforts and became a public figure who eventually utilized individual women's clubs and the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs as a basis for improving women's education and causes. Includes brief information on North Carolina crafts exhibited at fair.

Stokes, Durward T. "Charles Napoleon Bonaparte Evans and the *Milton Chronicle*." 46 (July 1969): 238-270.

On paper published from August 3, 1841 to June 28, 1883 and includes biography of Evans, history of the newspaper, and discussion of contents and advertisements which reveal history and interests of the town and area. Contains illustrations of some advertisements. Outstanding feature of paper was letters, written by Evans, from the fictional character, Jesse Holmes, the "Fool Killer." Appendix lists marriage accounts in the *Milton Chronicle*.

_____. "Five Letters from Jesse Holmes, the Fool Killer to the Editor of the *Milton Chronicle*." 50 (July 1973): 304-321.

Reprints five letters dated 1857, 1859, 1861, 1876, 1879 and located by Jay B. Hubbell in the 1930s. Charles Napoleon Bonaparte Evans, editor of the *Milton Chronicle* from 1841 to 1883, used letters from Jesse Holmes to express his own opinions about politics, social events, customs, morals, and people as well as other events and happenings. "Fool Killer" letters were so popular they were reprinted in other newspapers and served as the basis for other literary efforts.

Stroupe, Henry S. "The Beginnings of Religious Journalism in North Carolina, 1823-1865." 30 (January 1953): 1-22.

Discusses religious journals of various denominations, their founding, growth, and changes, in chronological order of their appearance. Includes alphabetical Check List and Finding List of all religious newspapers and magazines known to have been proposed or published in North Carolina before end of Civil War. Also indicates where files of the publications may be found.

_____. "'Cite Them Both to Attend the Next Church Conference': Social Control by North Carolina Baptist Churches, 1772-1908." 52 (April 1975): 156-170.

Uses individual church records to examine cases of expulsion from membership, personal differences between members, quarrels among ministers and male leaders, disagreements among women, problems involving Black members, unfaithful spouses, problem drinkers, dancing, stealing, and punishments for offenses.

Surratt, Jerry L. "The Moravian as Businessman: Gottlieb Schober of Salem." 60 (January 1983): 1-23.

Includes information on Schober's apprenticeship as a linen weaver and tailor; his life as a journeyman tailor, a tinsmith, a paper manufacturer; and his activities as family man and community citizen.

_____. "The Role of Dissent in Community Evolution among Moravians in Salem, 1772-1860." 52 (July 1975): 235-255.

Deals with religious and material situation of members as well as personal relationships, business life, attitudes towards bearing arms, regulations of single and married life, slave ownership, and lease system of landholding.

Sydnor, Charles Sackett. "A Slave Owner and His Overseers." 14 (January 1937): 31-38.

Uses manuscript diary kept by B.L.C. Wailes, operator of two plantations in Warren County, Mississippi, and focuses on the kinds of employment agreements with overseers and their results in management. Shows conflict of interest between owner and overseer was based on owner's concern for income and working capital and overseer's concern only for yearly crop.

Taylor, Rosser Howard. "The Gentry of Ante-Bellum South Carolina." 17 (April 1940): 114-131.

Deals with traits of the planters and their entertainments—horse racing, Fourth of July celebrations, Christmas celebrations, tournaments, gander-pullings, cock-fighting, hunting, and dancing.

Tilley, Nannie May. "Industries of Colonial Cranville County." 13 (October 1936): 273-289.

Reviews trapping, farming, farmer's tools, production of wheat, tobacco, fruit, cotton, livestock, milling, grist mills, making of tar, merchants, types of money, and briefly mentions other trades such as carpenters, joiners, saddlers, and blacksmiths.

_____. "Journal of the Surry County (N.C.) Agricultural Society." 24 (October 1947): 494-531.

Surveys history of Surry County membership and the society, the society's interests in soil improvement, education, westward migration, and depressed prices. Reproduces journal, dated and kept from September 25, 1819 to August 23, 1823.

Walser, Richard. "Biblio-biography of Skitt Taliaferro." 55 (October 1978): 375-395.

On Taliaferro's life and his two very different works—*The Grace of God Magnified* and *Fisher's River (North Carolina) Scenes and Characters*.

Watson, Alan D. "The Ferry in Colonial North Carolina: A Vital Link in Transportation." 51 (July 1974): 247-260.

Deals with necessity for use of ferries on inland waterways, licensing procedures, types of boats used for ferriage, landings construction, rates and fees, and problems of travelers.

_____. "North Carolina Slave Courts, 1715-1785." 60 (January 1983): 24-36.

Contains information on nature of slave resistance to bondage, their food and clothing, and their use of folk medicines and conjuring powders.

_____. "Ordinaries in Colonial Eastern North Carolina." 45 (January 1968): 67-83.

Discusses regulations controlling ordinaries, or public houses, violations of regulations, ordinary keepers, location of ordinaries, meals and beverages available, and stabling and pasturing for horses.

_____. "Orphanage in Colonial North Carolina: Edgecombe County as a Case Study." 52 (April 1975): 105-119.

On nature of orphanage including apprenticeships and trades, guardianship, food and lodging, wearing apparel, education and school supplies, as well as several examples of funeral arrangements and expenses.

_____. "Regulation and Administration of Roads and Bridges in Colonial Eastern North Carolina." 45 (October 1968): 399-417.

Concerns acts regulating construction and maintenance of roads, demands and reasons for roads, road construction and maintenance procedure, and bridge construction.

_____. "Society and Economy in Colonial Edgecombe County." 50 (July 1973): 231-255.

Uses county records and estate inventories to depict social and economic life in Edgecombe County from 1730 to 1775. Includes detailed information on houses, furnishings, food, lighting, clothing, footwear, jewelry, firearms, recreation, money, farm equipment, transportation, crops, slavery practices, beekeeping, livestock, fruit growing, stills, and liquor retailing.

_____. "Women in Colonial North Carolina: Overlooked and Underestimated." 58 (January 1981): 1-22.

Discusses lifestyles of free women and servants, degrees of freedom, marriages and marriage contracts, responsibilities of married women, divorce, and occupations of single women and widows.

Watson, Helen R. "A Journalistic Medley: Newspapers and Periodicals in a Small North Carolina Community, 1859-1860." 60 (October 1983): 457-485.

Concerns general and special interest newspapers and magazines subscribed to by Rocky Mount area citizens. Includes information on publications' contents and emphases as well as which titles received by various groups such as women, physicians, planters, clergymen, and newspaper editors.

_____. "The Books They Left: Some 'Libraries' in Edgecombe County, 1733-1783." 48 (July 1971): 245-257.

Uses estate records and sales lists as basis for discussion of types and sizes of private libraries and typical titles in the collections.

Webb, Elizabeth Yates. "Cotton Manufacturing and State Regulation in North Carolina, 1861-1865." 9 (April 1932): 117-137.

Deals with efforts of the State to regulate and promote manufacture of cotton, difficulties encountered by manufacturers and the State, and effect of Civil War on cotton industry.

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Comments on efforts to conserve Indian culture and on beginnings of Indian participation in tourist industry in Great Smoky Mountain National Park.

Wertenbaker, Thomas Jefferson. "The Restoring of Colonial Williamsburg." 27 (April 1950): 218-232.

Reviews history of restoration of Colonial Williamsburg and use of research and archaeology for accuracy in determining building sites, furnishings, interiors and exteriors, gardens, walks, streets, and costumes.

Wetmore, Ruth Y. "The Role of the Indian in North Carolina History." 56 (April 1979): 162-176.

On roles as Independent Nations, Defeated Adversaries, Invisible Men, and Emerging Communities. Includes comments on lifestyle and photographs.

Wiley, Bell Irvin. "Camp Newspapers of the Confederacy." 20 (October 1943): 327-335.

Discusses contents, publication schedule, and availability of various newspapers published in Confederate army camps.

Wiley, Mary C. "Childhood Recollection of my Father." 34 (October 1957): 517-529.

Information on 1870s-1880s toys, furniture, stories, personal experiences, books, recreations, games, and cholera epidemic. Father was Calvin Henderson Wiley, first superintendent of Public Schools.

Williams, Cratis. "Appalachian Speech." 55 (April 1978): 174-179.

Brief comments on traditional manner of speaking use of archaic strong past tense forms, vowel sounds, and strong "r". Includes "The Fox and the Bumblebee" in prototypical dialect.

Wilson, W. Eddie. "The Gourd in Southern History." 26 (July 1949): 300-305.

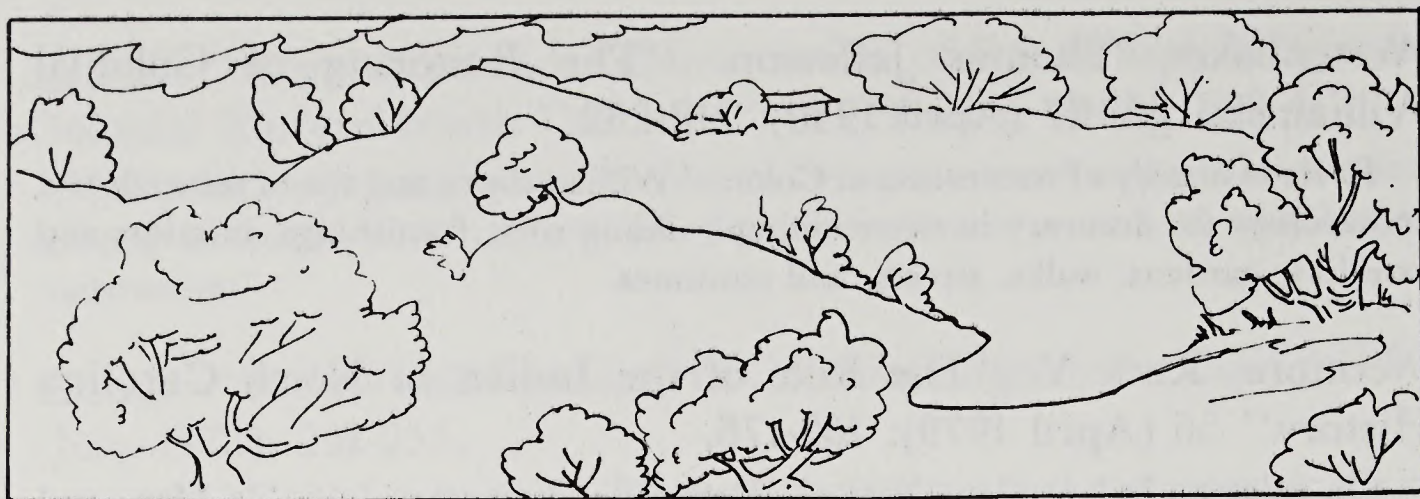
Presents references to kinds of and uses of gourds by Southern Indian tribes, by the pioneer, and as mentioned in selected examples of Southern literature.

Wolf, Jacquelyn H. "Patents and Tithables in Proprietary North Carolina, 1663-1729." 56 (July 1979): 263-277.

Examines land grants and tithable lists for period 1663 to 1729 and concludes that life-style and social structure were that of small farmers with a wealthy minority.

Wooten, Hugh Hill. "A Fourth Creek Farm from 1800 to 1830." 30 (April 1953): 167-175.

Includes information on farming and farm life from 1800 to 1830 obtained from property and various deeds, bills, and letters, concerning a 368-acre farm on Fourth Creek in Iredell County, located two miles north of Statesville. Discusses buildings, farming tools, crops, livestock, farm product sales and purchases.



The Oral Life of the Written Ballad of *The Wanton Wife of Bath*

By Betsy Bowden

Neither folklorists nor literary scholars have yet paid much attention to ballads with definite literary antecedents. Folklorists, however, have long agreed that ballad composition and transmission should not be termed purely oral. Meanwhile, literary scholars' awakening interest in reception aesthetics (i.e., in the investigation of a work's perceived meanings for pre-twentieth-century readers) is validating consideration of material heretofore scorned as "popular" or "subliterary."¹

In this case study I treat these and other issues concerning verbal art as actually practiced, not as falsely dichotomized. This particular ballad had sources both oral-traditional and individually composed; it appealed to audiences both elite and popular; and it remained in active oral and print circulation for at least two and a half centuries.

I have examined 54 copies of this ballad now at the British Library, Cambridge, the Bodleian, and Harvard. (It seems never to have reached Ireland, for no copies appear in the large Dublin collections.) The most recent chapbook was printed in 1856; the earliest extant broadside is datable ca. 1660. (See Fig. 1.) Record of *The Wanton Wife of Bath* appears even earlier, though, in the *Stationers' Registers* for 25 June 1600:

Yt is ordered touching a Disorderly ballad of *the wife of Bathe*. . . That all the same ballates shalbe brought in and burnt / And that either of the printers for theire Disorders in printinge yt shall pay v^s A pece for a fine. . . . And ther Imprisonment is respited till another tyme.

Attempted suppression of the irrepressible Wife failed, of course. In 1632 one Henry Goskin went to jail for printing *The Wanton Wife of Bath*.² By 1700 an anonymous author tried a different tactic. While expanding the ballad from about 140 lines to nearly 700, he claims that he has eliminated “What was *Papal* or *Heretical* in the former Copy,” and has let remain “nothing but that which is recorded in *Scripture* for our Example.”³ Both this long variant and the earlier, shorter variant saw print regularly throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. (See Appendices I and II for a sample text of each variant.)

Sometime before 1600, an unknown author created the shorter variant by combining two main sources, one certainly literary and the other probably oral. One source is certainly the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, available at the time in several folio editions including Thomas Speght's 1598 one, which provided such thorough apparatus (the first glossary ever, the first plot summaries, and more) that it was to remain the best Chaucer edition until 1775.⁴

The ballad's first author probably read Chaucer's text directly, rather than hearing or hearing about it. The first rhyme word in the ballad emphasizes the source's textuality: “As Chaucer he did write.”⁵ Throughout the ballad, besides, the author has skillfully developed exact characteristics of the Wife of Bath who appears in Chaucer's text. The *Wife of Bath's Prologue* begins with her statement that experience, rather than scriptural authority, enables her to speak about marriage, for she has had five husbands and welcomes the sixth “whan that evere he shal.”⁶ Some interpreters of Holy Scripture claim that a widow should not remarry, she says. They base their objections on the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman, “You have had five husbands, and that man whom you now have is not your husband” (John 4.18). The Wife of Bath thereupon constructs an elaborate opposing argument in favor of unrepressed sexuality, making reference to the same Biblical passages that male scholars would use to claim the contrary. Thus she argues against scripture, by citing scripture; and she begins her defense of what some would term sin with a direct attack on the words of the foremost scriptural authority, Jesus.

In print, therefore, the ballad's first author found a rousing protagonist ready for another round. In oral circulation, probably, he found the other source: a story in which someone cites scripture to convince a series of scriptural authorities, culminating in Jesus or God, that he deserves to enter heaven.

The closest analogue I have found to *The Wanton Wife of Bath* is a thirteenth-century French fabliau, its widespread popularity demonstrated by its survival in five manuscripts. In *Le vilain qui conquist paradis par plait*, a dead peasant arrives at heaven's gate. St. Peter refuses him entry, "for into this place the vile may not enter." He backs off when the peasant accuses him of thrice denying his Lord. Peter calls St. Thomas to help; the peasant accuses Thomas of doubting. Thomas calls St. Paul; the peasant accuses Paul of having Stephen stoned to death. The three saints confer, then call God to the pearly gate. The peasant successfully argues his case: he has lived a just and upright life, cared for the poor, and kept the sacraments. God grants entry: "You have made good your case against Paradise, and won it by debate." As do many fabliaux, this one closes with a proverbial moral barely related to the tale: "Wit is mightier than force."⁷ No one here has threatened force. The issue resolved instead would be familiar, to so careful a reader as the ballad's author, from Chaucer's poem *Gentillesse* and the old hag's speech ending the *Wife of Bath's Tale*: a person should be judged on merit, not on noble or lowly birth.

Chaucer's Wife of Bath did not live a life of merit, however, and in *The Wanton Wife of Bath* she makes no claim to have done so. Instead, the anonymous sixteenth-century author has her argue successfully for posthumous forgiveness of sins. (See Appendix I.)

At heaven's door, in the ballad, the Wife confronts seven sinners from the Old Testament and four from the New, including one woman per Testament who committed worse sins than her own—murder by Judith and prostitution by Mary Magdalene. Adam guards the pearly gates; thus Peter, confronting the Wife last rather than first as in the fabliau, is rescued from her accusation by the very Lord whom he had denied thrice. Having carried her case clear to the highest court, then, the Wife keeps it focussed on the issue of forgiveness. She debates with Christ by citing his own deeds recorded in scripture. He has a counter-argument to the first precedent she claims: I forgave the thief on the cross because he never knew my commandments, whereas you knew and ignored them. Christ concedes the case, though, as soon as the defendant claims precedent of the Prodigal Son. Alysoun of Bath enters heaven and, no doubt, soon becomes full partner in a prestigious law firm there.

Did the ballad's first author know the story in a form more resembling the fabliau or more resembling his own resultant ballad? It may well be that the debate topic had already shifted ground, from social-rank concerns of thirteenth-century France to theological concerns

of post-Reformation England. Perhaps an analogue closer in time to the ballad occurs in one of the unindexed multitude of sixteenth-century jestbooks and miscellanies. A modern edition with 313 stories from such ephemera contains no analogue, though, not even a distant one.⁸

Neither did Stith Thompson encounter any analogous story. The *Motif-Index* includes K2371.1, "Heaven entered by a trick" [but not by out-arguing the deity], and J1616, "St. Peter not guiltless" [but with no note of other heavenly denizens' guilt].⁹ The fabliau and the ballad resemble each other more than either one resembles related motifs such as these, for the two share the idea of using acquired legal and scholastic skills to overcome the very authorities who make and enforce laws. In ballad and fabliau both, as in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, experience conquers authority.

In whatever form the ballad's first author knew an analogue to the fabliau, it provided a vehicle ideal for Chaucer's Wife of Bath. Having begun her *Prologue* by attacking scripture with scriptural weapons, she goes on to tell how she used to employ similar tactics to keep her first three husbands in line. She would, for example, accuse them of amorous activities before the husbands could accuse her, and would roundly deny the validity of any misogynistic proverb they might have had in mind:

Sire olde kaynard, [she used to say to them,] is this thyn array?
Why is my neighebores wyf so gay?

.....
What dostow at my neighebores hous?
Is she so fair? Artow so amorous?

.....
Thow seyst that droppying houses, and eek smoke,
And chidyng wyves maken men to flee
Out of hir owene houses; a, benedicitee!
What eyleth swich an old man for to chide?
Thow seyst we wyves wol oure vices hide
Til we be fast, and thanne we wol hem shewe—
Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewel!

(WBP 235-36, 239-40, 278-84)

Throughout *The Wanton Wife of Bath*, similarly, the protagonist accuses each Biblical figure of a particular sin before each has had a chance to say much more than "What's all the ruckus here?" Only Adam and three of the New Testament figures even call her a sinner, without further specification. The fourth New Testament character, Thomas, dares to utter a misogynistic proverb before having his own

The wanton Wife of BATH.

To the Tune of, Flying Fame.



In Bath a wanton wife did dwell
as Causer she doth write;
Who did in pleasure spend her days
in many a fond delight.

Upon a time sore sick she was,
and at the length did dye:
Her soul at last at Heavens gate,
did knock most mightily.

Then Adam came unto the gate,
who knocketh there, quoth he,
I am the wife of Bath she said,
and faine would come to thee.

Thou art a sinner Adam said,
and here no place shall have:
Alas for you, good sir she said,
how giv you dotting Janabe.

I will come in, in spight, she said,
of all such churles as thee:
Thou wast the causer of our woe,
our pain and misery.

And first broke Gods Commandments,
in pleasure of thy wife:

When Adam heard her tell this tale,
he ran away for life.

Then down came Jacob to the gate,
and bids her pack to Hell:
Thou false deceiver, who said she,
thou maist be there full well.

For thou deceived thy Father dear,
and thine own brother too:
Away went Jacob presently
and made no more ado.

She knocks again with might and main:
and Lor he chides her straight:

Why then, quoth she, thou drunken ale,
who bids thee here to wait.

With thy two Daughters thou dost lye,
on them two Bastards got:

And thus most tauntingly she chaff
against poor silly Lor.

Who knock there, quoth Judith then,
with such shrill sounding notes:
Alas fine winks, you cannot hear,
quoth she, for cutting throats.

Good Lord how Judith blusht for shame,
when she heard her say so:

King David hearing of the same,
he to the gate did go.

Quoth David who knocks there so loud,
and maketh all this strife?

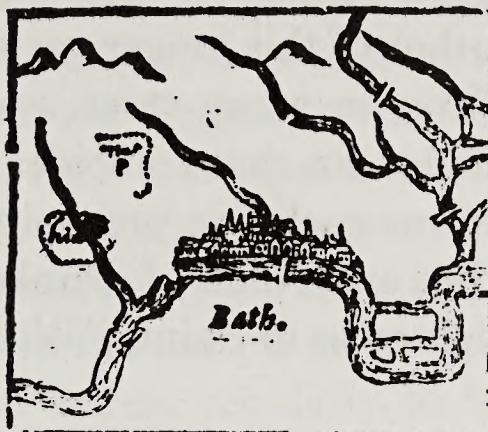
You were more kind, good sir, she said,
unto Vriahs Wife.

And when thou caused thy Servants
in battel to be slain;

Thou caused then more strife then I,
who would come here to faine.

Figure 1. One of the earliest extant copies of *The Wanton Wife of Bath*. Bodleian Library, Wood E. 25, fol. 93, (ca. 1660).

The second part to the same Tune.



The Romans mad said Solomon,
that thus both taunt a King :
Not half so mad as you, she said
I know in many a thing.
Thou hadst seven hundred wife at once,
for whom thou didst provide :
For all this three hundred whores
thou didst maintain beside.
And those made thee forsake thy God,
and worship stocks and stones,
Besides the charge they put the to
in breeding of young bones.
Hadst thou not been besides thy wife,
thou wouldest not have ventred :
And therefore I do marvel much,
how thou this place have entered.
I never heard, quoth Iona then,
so vile a scold as this :
Thou whoreson Run-away, quoth she
thou didst more amiss.
I think, quoth Thomas, womens tongues,
of Aspen leaves be made :
Thou unbelieving wretch, quoth she,
all is not true that's said.
When Mary Magdalen heard then,
did come unto the gate :
Quoth she, good woman you must think,
upon your former state.
No sinner enters in this place
quoth Mary Magdalen, then
I were ill for you fair Mistress mine
she answered her again.
You for your Whoretry, quoth she,
should once been stoned to death :
Had not our Saviour Christ come by
and written on the earth.

It is not by your occupation
you are become Divine :
I hope my soul in Christs passion
shall be as safe as thine.
Then rose the good Apostle Paul,
unto his Wife he said :
Except thou shake thy sins away,
thou here shall be denied.
Remember Paul what thou hast done,
although a lewd desire,
How thou didst persecute Gods Church,
with watch as hot as fire.
Then up starts Peter at the last,
and to the gate he hies :
Fond fool, quoth he, knock not so fast,
thou weariest Christ with cries.
Peter, said she, content thy self
for mercy may be won,
I never did deny my Christ
as thou thy self hath done.
When as our Saviour Christ heard this,
with a shew of Angels bright,
He comes unto his sinful soul,
who stumbled at his sight.
Of him for mercy he did crave,
quoth he, thou hast refused
My proffer, grace, and mercy both,
and much my name abused.
Doze have I sinned, O Lord, said she,
and spent my time in vain,
But bring me like a wandering Sheep,
unto thy flock again.
O Lord my God, I will amend
my former wicked vice ;
The thief at the pooz silly words
past into Paradise.
My Laws and my Commandments
saith Christ, were known to thee ;
But of the same in any wise
not yet one word didst see.
I grant the same O Lord quoth she,
most lewdly did I live,
But yet the loving Father did
his Prodigal Son forgive.
And I forgive thy soul, he said,
through thy repenting ere ;
Come therefore enter into my joys
I will thee not deny.

London, Printed for F. Coler, in Wic-
street, near Hipter Garden.

sin flung in his face. "All is not true that's said," retorts the Wife to the disciple who had not believed the truth of what was seen (*WWB* 77-80).

Both the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *The Wanton Wife of Bath* subtly give the Wife the upper hand in every accusation. In *The New Wife of Beath Much better Reformed, Enlarged, and Corrected* (1700) she has become a bit slower on the uptake. The author of this longer variant likes to leave nothing subtle or unsaid. Thus, in many cases, each Biblical figure accuses the Wife of a particular sin that coincides with a sin he himself committed—as she informs each one promptly and profusely. Abraham accuses her of lying and Noah of drunkenness, for example, while Aaron is so short-sighted as to claim, "With idols you have led your life."¹⁰

The longer variant, otherwise entitled *The Wonderful Travels of the Wife of Bath* or *The Wife of Bath Reformed and Corrected*, or *The Wife of Bath Reviv'd Once More* or *The Old Wife of Bath*, appeals less to twentieth-century tastes than does its earlier counterpart. Yet throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it attracted the same audiences who were so fond also of that runaway best seller, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). Indeed, the author of *The New Wife of Bath* guides her through an imitation of Christian's journey for 150 lines before this Wife even arrives at heaven's gate, at the starting point of the earlier ballad. This longer variant, in about a third of the versions I have seen, is prefaced by the author's stated intention that this ballad be understood not in "a literal Sense, but be [sic] way of *Allegory* and *Mystical*, which thus may edifie."¹¹

Edifyingly, the traveller in *The New Wife of Bath* first meets, recognizes, and insults Judas. (See Appendix II.) The road to heaven passes the gates to hell, then, such that the Wife's skill at "flyting" can be tested on the devil himself (*NWB* 74). Artistic tension is dissipated in that she and Lucifer both want to keep her out of hell. Still, each does impart one relatively lively insult before she goes her way: he says that hell is overfull of her sort, and she accuses him of poor personal hygiene (*NWB* 78-88). She might well look that grimy herself, after toiling up the narrow thorny path to the heavenly city. Undaunted, she hammers on the door and, when Adam opens it, claims that she has already been standing there for two hours (*NWB* 153-54).

This late-seventeenth-century author has expanded dialogues from *The Wanton Wife of Bath* and greatly augmented the cast of Biblical

characters. After winning thirty-two confrontations, the new Wife faces Christ for a 150-line theological discussion during which she begs for crumbs of mercy and otherwise displays substantially less spunk than her earlier counterpart. An investigation of this closing section and the preface, by someone well versed in late-seventeenth-century theology, could demonstrate just what was considered “*Papal or Heretical in the former Copy*” and could perhaps lead to tentative identification of its author. Dialect in the 1700 version would indicate a Scot; in addition, most subsequent versions of *The New Wife of Bath* were printed in Scotland whereas most *Wanton Wives* hailed from London.¹²

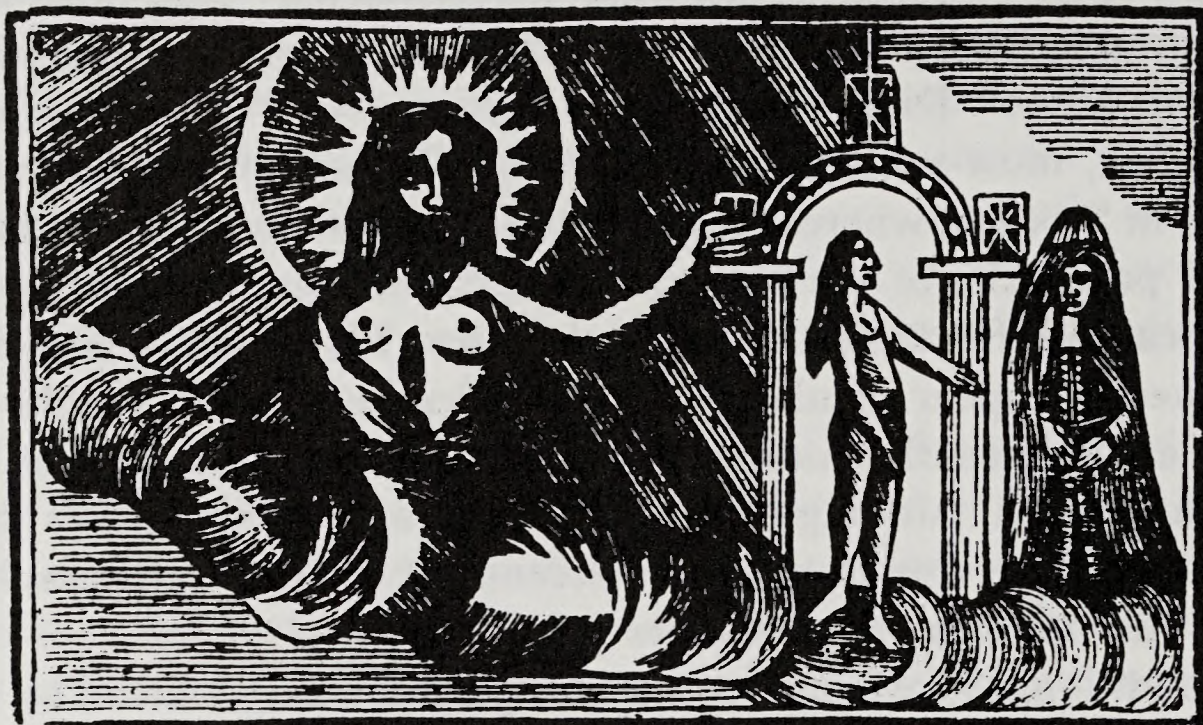
The popularity of the longer, more print-oriented variant by no means caused the decline of its predecessor. *The Wanton Wife of Bath* continued to appear regularly, as broadsides gave way to chapbooks in the late eighteenth century then began to reclaim the field in the early nineteenth. Although many more copies of long variants than of short ones survive from the nineteenth century, *The Wanton Wife of Bath* still appears on broadsides printed after 1819.

In addition, the shorter variant was persistently preferred by the London literary establishment. Joseph Addison praises it in a 1711 *Spectator* as “that excellent old Ballad.” His remarks are quoted and developed as headnote to *The Wanton Wife of Bath* in the precedent-setting *Collection of Old Ballads* edited in 1723-25, perhaps by Ambrose Philips. Thomas Percy invokes Addison likewise, to introduce the ballad in the first edition of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). Apparently the protagonist offended some eighteenth-century readers as heartily as she had the Stationers who first banned her, however, for Percy made only one change between his second and third editions: elimination of *The Wanton Wife of Bath*.¹³

In doing so Percy eliminated a text that he had lavishly embellished with his own fake-archaic spelling, as usual, while transferring it from “an ancient copy in black-print, in the Pepys collection.” Percy did, however, conscientiously footnote variant phrases. Compared to the version provided here in Appendix I, Percy preferred “And eke a” to “Now gip you” in line 16, “slunk” to “went” in line 31, and “They say” to “I think” in line 77.

Other early evidence likewise demonstrates intense scholarly interest in what twentieth-century scholars were to regard as subliterate. For example, on a broadside ca. 1770 now at the British Library, someone has crossed out numerous words and phrases to insert handwritten replacements. (See Fig. 2.) Sometimes the corrector modernizes

The Wanton WIFE of BATH.



IN BATH a WANTON WIFE did dwell,
 As CHAUCER he ~~did~~ ^{write},
 Who did in Pleasure spend her Days
 In many a fond Delight.
 Upon a Time sore sick she was,
 And at the length did die;
 Her Soul ~~arrived~~ ^{at} Heaven's Gate, ^[at last]
 And there it knock'd ~~powerfully~~ ^{most mightily}
 Then ADAM came unto the Gate,
 Who knocketh there? quoth he,
 I am the Wife of BATH, she said,
 And fain would come to thee.
 Thou art a Sinner, ADAM said,
 And here no Place shall have;
 Alas! for you, good Sir, she said,
 Now ~~thou art~~ ^{thou art} doating Knave.
 I will come in spite she said,
 Of all such Churls as thee;
 Thou wert the Cause of all our Woe,
 Our Pain and Misery.
 And first broke God's Commandment,
 In Pleasure ~~with~~ ^{thy} Wife,
 When ADAM heard her tell that Tale,
 He ran away for Life.

Then down came JACOB to the Gate,
~~and~~ ^{Who} bid her pack to Hell:
 You false Deceiver, why, said she,
 Thou might be there as well:
 For thou deceiv'st ~~thy~~ ^{your} Father dear,
 And ~~your~~ ^{your} own Brother too;
 So away went JACOB presently,
 And made no more ado.
 She knock'd again with Might and Main,
 And LOT ~~came to the Gate~~ ^{came to the Gate}, ^{quoth}
 How now, quoth she, thou doubting Ass,
 Who bidst thee here to wait?
 With thy two Daughters thou didst lie,
 On them two Bastards got:
 And thus most tauntingly she chafed
 Against poor silly LOT.
 Who knocketh there? quoth JUDITH then,
 With such shrill sounding Notes?
~~This Noise~~, fine Minx, ~~thou~~ ^{thou} can'st not hear,
 Quoth she, for cutting Throats.
 Good Lord, how JUDITH blush'd for shame
 When she heard her say so,
 King DAVID hearing of the same,
~~he~~ ^{he} unto the Gate did go.

Figure 2. Broadside with handwritten corrections. British Library, L.R. 271.a.2/1.2, #23 (1770?).

Quoth DAVID who knocks there so loud?
 And ~~with~~ all this strife:
 You were more kind, good Sir, *said she said*
 Unto URIAN'S Wife;
 When thou ~~didst~~ *cause* thy Servant
 In Battle to be slain;
 Thou caus'd then more Strife than I;
 Who would come here so faine.
 The Woman's mad, quoth SOLOMON,
~~Let~~ Thus for to taunt a King:
 Not half so mad as you, she said,
 I know in many Things; *at once*
~~You~~ had ~~Seven~~ Hundred Wives *he said*,
 For whom thou didst provide;
 [Yet] for all this three Hundred Whores
 Thou didst maintain beside;
 And these made thee forsake thy God,
 And worship Stocks and Stones;
 Besides the Charge they put thee to
 In breeding of young Bones:
 Hadst thou not been beside thy Wits,
 Thou wouldst not ~~(thus)~~ have ventur'd,
 And therefore I do marvel much
 How thou this Place hast enter'd.
 I never heard, quoth JONAS then,
 So vile a Scold as this:
 You Whoreson, run away *said she*,
 For thou didst ~~more~~ *amiss*
 I think, quoth THOMAS, Women's Tongues
 Of Aspen Leaves are made:
~~You~~ *un*believing Wretch, *said she*,
 All is not true that's said.
 When MARY MAGDALEN heard then *chafe*,
 She came unto the Gate;
 Quoth she, good Woman you must think
 Upon your former State;
 No Sinner enter in this Place,
 Quoth MARY MAGDALEN *then*:
 'Twere ill for you, fair Mistress *with me*,
 She answer'd her again,
 You for you Honesty, *said she*,
 Should once been ston'd to Death,
 Had not our Saviour CHRIST come by,
 And ~~whit~~ upon the Earth:
 It ~~is~~ *not* ~~thy~~ *your* Occupation,
 You are become divine;
 My Soul in Christ's passion,
~~It~~ *will* be as safe as thine.

Then rose the good Apostle PAUL,
 Unto this Wife he ~~cried~~ *said*.
 Except ~~you~~ *shake* your Sins away,
 Thou here ~~must~~ be deny'd.
 Remember PAUL what thou hast done,
 Ail thro' a leud Desire;
 How thou didst persecute God's church
 With Wrath as hot as Fire.
 Then up starts PETER at the List,
 And to the Gate he hies;
 Fond fool, said he, knock not so fast,
 Thou weariest CHRIST with Cries.
 PETER ~~the~~ *cries*, content thyself,
 For Mercy may be won.
 I never did deny my Lord, *Christ*,
 As thou thyself hast done.
 When as our Saviour CHRIST heard this,
 With heavenly Angels bright.
 He came unto this sinful Soul,
 Who trembled at ~~the~~ *his* sight.
 Of him for Mercy she did crave,
 Quoth he thou hast refus'd
 My proffer'd Grace, and Mercy ~~too~~ *both*
 And much my Name abus'd.
 Sore I have sinn'd O Lord, said she,
 And ~~spent~~ *my* Time in vain,
 But bring me like a wandering Sheep
 Into thy ~~fold~~ *fold* again.
 O Lord my God I will amend,
 My former wicked Vice;
 The Thief at these ~~repentant~~ *repentant* Words
 Past into Paradise.
 My Laws and my Commandments
~~Saint~~ *Christ* were known too thee
 But ~~not~~ *not* the same in any wise,
 Not yet ~~an~~ *me* did ye.
 I grant the same, *My Lord she said*.
 Most leudly ~~it~~ *did* live;
 But yet the loving Father did,
 The Prodigal forgive.
 So I forgive thy soul, he said,
 Thro' thy repentant cry:
 Come ~~(thou)~~ *here*fore into my rest,
 I will not thee deny.

Printed and Sold in Aldermay Church
 Yard, London. It

verb and pronoun forms whereas sometimes he archaizes them; this and other indications make it probable that he is reproducing a version that he knows or has before him, rather than creating his own word forms as Percy had done.

This corrector's preferred version and the broadside text on which he wrote both differ in many details from the one reproduced in Appendix I. For example, line 43 is corrected from "This Noise, fine Minx, thou can'st not bear" to "Alas, fine Minx, you can not hear," both of which convey quite different discursive meanings than "Alas! fine minks, we come not here."

In ways yet to be analyzed fully, however, discursive meaning is far less at issue in performed literature than in recent literature intended for silent reading.¹⁴ Music, though, is at issue. One quarter of the versions of *The Wanton Wife of Bath* specify in some phrase, "To the tune of Flying Fame, &c."—to the same tune as "Chevy Chase," sometimes elsewhere called "In Peascod Time."¹⁵ (See Fig. 1.) In contrast, no version of *The New Wife of Bath* names a tune or gives any other indication of singability. The long variant is always printed continuously in paragraphs, for example, whereas the shorter variant is often divided into four-line stanzas.

This and other points of contrast might indicate material suitable for a carefully delineated study of that long-hypothesized dichotomy, oral vs. print transmission. Each variant was created by a now-anonymous author; both were released for communal re-creation. What happened during the transmission of each?

If such a dichotomy were to have any validity, one would hypothesize that *The Wanton Wife of Bath* would behave more like oral folksongs. Its comparatively frequent textual changes would tend to involve homonyms, rhymes, and wording with similar phonemic and metrical patterns. For such an hypothesis *The New Wife of Bath* would act more like written literature: its infrequent textual changes would result mostly from printers' errors or intentional rewriting.

In fact, a comparison shows that both variants behaved exactly the same way in transmission. The 54 copies examined happen to include 27 of the short variant and 27 of the long one. A few are duplicate copies of a given version. By "version" here I mean a different typesetting that also displays—in every case I have investigated—changes in wording. For example, the version of *The Wanton Wife of Bath* reproduced in Appendix I was printed by John Pitts in his shop at No. 14, Great St. Andrew Street, at some time before 1819 when he moved to No. 6, Great St. Andrew Street, and printed a different version.¹⁶ Two copies

survive of the version shown in Appendix I—one in the British Library with call number 806.k.16. (81), the other at Cambridge in the Madden collection, 3.837.

Overall, the 27 copies of the short variant encompass 23 versions of it. The long, more bookish variant's 27 copies include 20 versions. This difference in proportion is not statistically significant; neither variant is more stable as a whole.

Nor is the difference significant as to the number of lines in each variant that contain textual changes. I have gone line by line through six entire versions of *The Wanton Wife of Bath* and through the first 144 lines of five versions of *The New Wife of Bath*, counting which lines ever vary. In the shorter variant 92 lines vary, in the longer variant 104. The percentage of unstable lines thus is 64% in the apparently more singable variant, 72% in the apparently more print-oriented variant.

Such statistics lean, if anywhere, toward the opposite conclusion than would be promulgated by an oral/print dichotomy. It looks as if the variant so influenced by *Pilgrim's Progress* has undergone more extensive communal re-creation than has the older variant to the tune of "Flying Fame."

In both variants furthermore, the changes can be attributed to oral transmission far more readily than to rewriting or to print errors. Nearly all are ear changes, not eye changes. For example, in *The Wanton Wife of Bath* she calls Lot an ass. One usual form of line 35 is "Why then, quoth she, thou drunken ass," as in Appendix I. But we find also "How now, quoth she, thou drunken ass," and both these opening phrases in combinations with "thou doating ass," and "thou doubting ass." The one instance of "thou drinking ass" looks more like a print error.¹⁷ She goes on, variously,

Who bids thee here to wait?
Who bid thee here to wait?
Who bade thee here to wait?
Who bids thou here to wait?
Who bade thee here to prate?
(WWB 36)

Except for the last instance, the only changes occur in verb and pronoun forms. Passers-on of the ballad readily interchanged past and present tenses of "bid," and nominative and objective cases of the familiar second-person pronoun.

Although no instance of this line happens to modernize or archaize a verb or pronoun, such changes occur very often. For example, *The*

Wanton Wife of Bath begins her account of Solomon's shortcomings with, variously,

Thou haddest seven hundred wives
Thou hadst seven hundred wives at once
Thou hast seven hundred wives at once
Thou had seven hundred wives at once
You had seven hundred wives at once
You had seven hundred wives she said

(WWB 61)

In *The New Wife of Bath* the protagonist is far less explicit about all these wives and Solomon's three hundred whores besides. All blend together within an accusation that Solomon "wast so lewd in Venus' plays," or (with a more modern verb in the earliest extant version) "was so lewd in Venus Playes," or (in a 1785 version entitled *The Wife of Beith by Chaucer*) "grew so lewd at Venus play" (NWB 319). Despite its classical reference and stiff diction, this line contains just the same sort of small aural changes as do lines in *The Wanton Wife of Bath*.

As another example, taken from the section most directly indebted to *Pilgrim's Progress*, the Wife sees atop the hill the heavenly Jerusalem variously

Shining with gold bright as the sun
Shining with gold light as the sun
Shining with gold like to the sun

(NWB 139).

Even the opening line changes, as is never the case for the shorter variant. Of the 20 versions of the longer variant, 15 begin "There was a worthy Wife of Bath." Two begin "There was a wicked Wife of Bath," however, and three "There was a wanton Wife of Bath."

Worthy, wicked, wanton—all three words sound enough alike to interchange in oral performance, but a revising author or an exacting typesetter would notice that each word conveys quite a different discursive meaning. Such changes entered the ballad text, I suggest, because each printer set type for the version he already knew. He did not set it from memory, probably, but rather had before him a text into which he incorporated details from a version ringing in his head. In the rush of production, a worker might well not even realize that he was introducing changes. He would glance at the line of text to be set, mind *ps* and *qs* while picking type from the font, take the composing stick to the press without re-reading the line, and proceed to the ballad's next line without a pause.

If it were not for all these printers trying to make money quickly, without taking time to proofread, we would have no evidence at all of early ballads or their transmission. The life history of this one ballad shows just how false are dichotomies by which scholars have tried to draw lines between high art worthy of intellectual study and folk art worthy at best of bemusement. Both variants of the ballad were sold to the same customers who, during its later life, were also buying inexpensive unaccredited reprints of Thomas Tyrwhitt's 1775 edition of Chaucer, which he had forgotten to copyright. Printers sold all such products to the folk.

Through the centuries rich and not-so-rich folks have read Chaucer aloud, read Chaucer silently, heard Chaucer read aloud, heard sung *The Wanton Wife of Bath*, read aloud or read silently broadsides and chapbooks containing *The Wanton Wife of Bath*, heard sung *The New Wife of Bath*, read silently or read aloud *The New Wife of Bath*. Analysis based on oral/written or another false dichotomy is not merely misleading. It is wrong. Verbal art must be analyzed as both text and performance, not as one or the other. And we are all the folk.

George Gordon, Lord Byron, thought that Chaucer wrote a work entitled *Wife of Bath*. He thought that this poem, in which "the whole action passes on the outside of heaven," served as proof that in literary high art "saints, etc., may be permitted to converse in works not intended to be serious."¹⁸ Nowadays Byron is firmly set in the firmament of Great English Writers Deserving of Literary Criticism, right up there with the Father of English Literature whom he had not bothered to read. Instead George Gordon, Lord Byron, just like other folks, had listened.

NOTES

1. For background in these two areas see respectively D. K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship since 1898* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1959), and Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Methuen, 1984). For nonrestrictive approaches to ballads see David C. Fowler, *A Literary History of the Popular Ballad* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1968), Albert B. Friedman, *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), and Leslie Shepard, *The History of Street Literature: The Story of Broadside Ballads, Chapbooks, Proclamations, News-Sheets, Election Bills, Tracts, Pamphlets, Cocks, Catchpennies, and other Ephemera* (Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1973).

2. This imprisonment and the *Stationers' Registers* entry are both recorded by Caroline Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion, 1357-1900*, 3 vols. paginated as 6 parts (1925; reprint, New York: Russell & Russell, 1960), III, iv, p. 54.

3. "To the Reader," preface to *The New Wife of Beath, Much better Reformed, Enlarged, and Corrected, than it was formerly in the old uncorrect Copy. With the Addition of many other Things* (Glasgow: R. Sanders, 1700), edited by W. C. Hazlitt in his *Fugitive Tracts Written in Verse Which Illustrate the Condition of Religious and Political Feeling in England And the State of Society there during Two Centuries, Second Series—1600-1700* (n.p.: for private circulation, 1875), separately paginated last in collection.

4. For an overview see Paul G. Ruggiers, ed., *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition* (Norman, Okla.: Pilgrim Books, 1984). Revised editions of Speght appeared in 1602 and 1687. John Urry's 1721 edition was immediately and justly denounced as inaccurate; a decade later, Thomas Morell barely began a new edition. Thomas Tyrwhitt went to manuscript sources to publish a new edition of *Canterbury Tales* in four volumes in 1775, followed by a glossary volume in 1778.

5. *The Wanton Wife of Bath*, line 2. This shorter variant of the ballad is hereafter cited in my text as *WWB* with line numbers referring to the version of it reproduced in Appendix I. I will be discussing my use of the term "version" and the extent to which each line quoted may differ in other versions of *The Wanton Wife of Bath*. Line 2, for example, is sometimes "As Chaucer he doth write."

6. *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, line 45, hereafter cited in my text as *WBP* with line numbers referring to *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), pp. 105-16.

7. Quotations in this summary come from the translation of this fabliau as "Of the Churl Who Won Paradise," done in 1910 by I. Butler and reprinted in *The Portable Medieval Reader*, ed. James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin (1949; reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1977), pp. 512-15. For information on manuscripts and editions see Charles Muscatine, *The Old French Fabliaux* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 214 and references listed there. The parallel was first noted by J. Woodfall Ebsworth, ed., *The Roxburghe Ballads*, 9 vols. in 8 (1872-99; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1966), VII, p. 212.

8. No analogue appears in *A Hundred Merry Tales and Other English Jestbooks of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. P.M. Zall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963).

9. See Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955-58), IV, pp. 131, 497.

10. *The New Wife of Bath*, line 271. This longer, later variant of the ballad is hereafter cited in my text as *NWB* with line numbers referring to the version of it reproduced in Appendix II. Note that, as is common, that version is not in fact entitled *The New Wife of Bath*; for efficiency's sake all versions of the long variant are here labelled *NWB*.

11. "To the Reader," in Hazlitt.

12. The long variant was published in Glasgow (by at least four different presses), Edinburgh (two presses), Falkirk (three presses), Paisley (two presses), and "Moscow: For the Cossacks." No version of it names London, although some have no attribution. In contrast, seven London presses claim credit for versions of the short variant, and other versions can be assigned to London on external evidence. Printers in Bristol, Peterhead, and Newcastle published one version apiece. The short variant was also translated ca. 1790 and published in Amsterdam and other Dutch cities as *Vrouw Snaversnel: Volksliedje, op eene aangename wys: Gevolgd naar de Engelsche Ballade, The Wanton Wife of Bath*.

13. I have not independently verified this as sole change; it is noted as such by both Ebsworth (cited in n. 7), p. 212, and Friedman (cited in n. 1), p. 201. Addison's essay for 13 December 1711 can be found in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), II, pp. 458-62. *A Collection of Old Ballads*, 3 vols. (London: J. Roberts et al., 1723-25) is matter-of-factly attributed to Ambrose Philips by George Sampson, for example, in *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 395; Philips's authorship is denied by Friedman, p. 147, with further references. In *A Collection of Old Ballads*, *The Wanton Wife of Bath* appears in vol. II, pp. 173-78. In the 1765 first edition of Percy's *Reliques*, *The Wanton Wife of Bath* appears in vol. III, pp. 146-52; the quotation that follows occurs on p. 146.

14. Problems and approaches are delineated in Richard Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1984); Mark W. Booth, *The Experience of Songs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Betsy Bowden, *Performed Literature: Words and Music by Bob Dylan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Bowden, *Chaucer Aloud: The Varieties of Textual Interpretation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987); Paula Johnson, *Form and Transformation in Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972); and Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen, 1982). See also the journals *Oral Tradition* and *Literature in Performance*.

15. For a full account of the tune see Claude M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1966), pp. 96-101.

16. See Leslie Shepard, *John Pitts: Ballad Printer of Seven Dials, London 1765-1844, with a Short Account of His Predecessors in the Ballad and Chapbook Trade* (London: Private Libraries Association, 1969), p. 55, for this information, which contradicts the two libraries' estimated dates for this version, respectively "1820?" and "1700-1800." As another example, I have examined two copies of the version that Pitts printed after 1819: one at the Bodleian as Douce 4 (29), the other at Cambridge as Madden 3.838.

17. In the preliminary set of examples in this article, it would be distracting (I feel) to reproduce varying capitalization and typefaces as well as variant wording. Likewise, each set of examples is arranged in an order to highlight points of contrast, not in a chronological order.

18. Byron, *The Vision of Judgment*, 1821, quoted by Spurgeon, II, p. 131.

APPENDIX I.

THE WANTON WIFE OF BATH.

In Bath a wanton wife did dwell.
As Chaucer he did write,
Who did in pleasure spend her days,
In many a fond delight,
Upon a time sore sick she was, 5
And at the length did die,
Her soul came to Elysium's gate,
And knock'd most mightily.
When Adam came unto the gate,
Who knocketh there? quoth he; 10
I am the wife of Bath she said,
And fain would come to thee.
Thou art a sinner, Adam said,
And here no place shall have,
Alas! for you, good Sir, she said, 15
Now gip you doating knave.
I will come in, in spite, she said,
Of all such churls as thee,
Thou art the canser of our woe [sic],
Our pain and misery: 20
You first broke the commandment,
To pleasure thine own wife,
When Adam heard her tell this tale,
He ran away for life.
Then down came Jacob to the gate, 25
And bid her pack to hell,
Thou false deceiver, why? quoth she,
Thou shouldst be there as well;
For thou deceivest thy father dear,
And thy own brother too, 30
Away went Jacob presently,
And made no more ado
She knocks again with might and main
And lot he chides her straight [sic],

Why then, quoth she, thou drunken ass, 35
 Who bids thee here to wait?
 With thy two daughters thou didst lie,
 On them two bastards got,
 And thus most tauntingly she chaft,
 Against poor silly Lot. 40
 Who knocketh there? quoth Judith then,
 With such shrill sounding notes,
 Alas! fine minks, we come not here,
 Quoth she, for cutting throats;
 Good lack how Judah blush'd for shame, 45
 When he heard her say so [sic].
 King David hearing her say that,
 He to the gate did go.
 Quoth he, who knocks there so loud,
 And maketh all this strife, 50
 You were more kind, good Sir, she said,
 Unto Uriah's wife;
 And when thou causeth thy servants
 In battle to be slain,
 Thou causeth them more strife than I, 55
 Who would come in so fain.
 The woman's mad, said Solomon,
 That thus doth taunt a king,
 Not half so bad as you she said,
 I know in many a thing; 60
 Thou hadst seven hundred wives at once
 For whom thou didst provide,
 For all this three hundred whores,
 Thou didst maintain beside.
 And those made thee forget thy God, 65
 And worship stocks and stones,
 Besides the charge they put thee to,
 In breeding of young bones;
 Hadst thou not been out of thy wits,
 Thou wouldst not have ventur'd, 70
 And therefore I do marvel much,
 How you this place have enter'd.
 I never heard quoth Jonas then,
 So vile a scold as this,

Thou art not without faults quoth she, 75
 Thou hast likewise done amiss;
 I think, quoth Thomas, women's tongues
 Of aspin leaves are made,
 Thou unbelieving saint quoth she,
 All is not true that's said, 80
 When Mary Magdalen heard this,
 She came unto the gate;
 Says she good woman you must think,
 Upon your former state,
 No sinner enters in this place, 85
 Quoth Mary Magdalen;
 'Tis well for you then fair Mistress,
 She answer'd her again.
 You for your honesty quoth she,
 Should once been ston'd to death, 90
 Had not our Saviour Christ come by,
 And writ it on the earth.
 It was your occupation,
 You are become divine,
 I hope my soul in Christ's passion, 95
 Shall be as safe as thine.
 Then rose up the good apostle Paul,
 Unto this wife he said,
 Except thou shake thy sins away,
 Thou here shalt be deny'd. 100
 Remember Paul what thou hast done,
 All through a wild desire,
 How thou didst persecute the church,
 With wrath as hot as fire.
 Then up rofe Peter at the last [sic], 105
 And to the gate he hies,
 Sinner quoth he, knock not so fast,
 Thou weariest us with cries.
 Peter quoth she content thyself,
 For mercy may be won, 110
 I never did deny the faith,
 As thou thyself hast done,
 When as our Saviour then heard this,
 With heavenly angels bright,

He comes unto this sinful soul, 115
 Who trembles at the sight.
 Of him for mercy she did crave,
 Quoth he thou hast refused,
 My profer'd grace and mercy both,
 And much my name abus'd. 120
 Sore have I sin'd O Lord said she,
 And spent my time in vain,
 But bring me like a wandering sheep,
 Unto thy flock again.
 O Lord my God I will forsake, 125
 My former wicked vice,
 The thief when he had said these words,
 Pass'd into Paradise.
 My laws and my commandments,
 Saith Christ were known to thee, 130
 But of the same no notice took,
 As I did plainly see.
 Do thou forgive me now quoth she
 Most lewdly I did live,
 But yet the loving father did, 135
 His wicked son forgive.
 I will forgive thy soul said he,
 For thy repenting cry.
 So come enter into my rest,
 For I'll not thee deny. 140

Printed and Sold by J. Pitts, No. 14, Great St. Andrew Street, 7 Dials.
 [Cambridge University Library: Madden 3.837]

APPENDIX II.

THE WIFE OF BEITH REFORMED AND CORRECTED, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HER DEATH,

And of her Journey to Heaven;

How on the road she fell in with Judas, who led her to the
Gate of Hell, and what conversation she had with the Devil,
who would not let her in:

ALSO,

HOW AT LAST SHE GOT TO HEAVEN,
And the difficulties she encountered before she got admittance there.

GLASGOW:

Published and Sold, Wholesale and Retail,
by ROBERT HUTCHISON, Bookseller, No. 19, Saltmarket.
1822.

THE WIFE OF BEITH.

In Beith once dwelt a worthy wife,
Of whom brave Chauner mention makes [sic],
She lived a licentious life,
And namely in venereal acts;
But death did come for all her cracks,
When years were spent and days out-driven,
Then suddenly she sickness takes,
Deceast forthwith, and went to heaven.

5

But as she went upon the way,
There follow'd her a certain guide,
And kindly he to her did say,
Where mean you dame for to abide?

10

I know you are the Wife of Beith,
And would not then that you go wrong,
For I'm your friend and will be leath
That you go through this narrow throng,
This way is broader, go with me,
And very pleasant is the way;
I'll bring you there where you would be,

15

Go with me friend, say me not nay. 20
 She looked on him and did speer,
 I pray you sir, what is your name?
 Show me the way how you came here,
 To tell to me it is no shame.
 Is that a favour 'bout your neck; 25
 And what is that upon your side?
 Is it a bag of silver tack?
 What are you then? Where do you bide?
 I was a servant unto Christ,
 And Judas likewise is my name. 30
 I knew you by your colour first,
 Forsooth indeed you are to blame,
 Your master did you not betray?
 And hang yourself when you had done?—
 Where'er you bide I will not stay; 35
 Go then you knave let me alone.
 Whate'er I be I'll be your guide,
 Because you know not well the way;
 Will ye but once in me confide,
 I'll do all friendship that I may. 40
 What would you me? where do you dwell?
 I have no will to go with thee;
 I fear it is some lower cell,
 I pray thee therefore let me be.
 This is a stormy night and cold, 45
 I'll bring you to a warm inn;
 Will ye go forward and be bold,
 And mend your pace till we win in.
 I fear your inn will be too warm,
 For too much hotness is not best; 50
 Such hotness there may do me harm,
 And keep me that I do not rest;
 I know your way it is to hell,
 For you are none of the eleven;
 Go haste you then into your cell, 55
 My way is only unto heaven.
 That way is by the gates of hell,
 If you intend there for to go,
 Go dame, I will not you compel,

But I with you will go also 60
Then down they went a right steep hill,
Where smoke and darkness did abound,
And pitch and sulphur burned still,
With yells and cries, hills did rebound.

The fiend himself came to the gate, 65
And asked him where he had been.
Do ye not know and have forgot,
Seeking this wife could not be seen.

Good dame, he said would you be here,
I pray you then tell me your name, 70
The Wife of Beith since that you spier,
But to come in I were to blame,

I will not have you here good dame,
For you are mistress of the flyting
If once within this gate you come, 75
I will be troubled with your biting;
Cummer go back, and let me be,
Here are too many of your rout;
For woman lewd like unto thee,
I cannot turn my foot about. 80

Sir Thief I say, I shall bide out,
But gossip thou wast ne'er to me
For to come in I'm not so stout,
And of my biting thou'st be free
But Lucifer what's that on thee? 85
Hast thou no water in this place?

Thou look'st so black it seems to me
Thou ne'er dost wash thy ugly face.
If we had water here to drink,
We would not care for washing then; 90
Into those flames and filthy stink,
We burn with fire unto the doom.

Upbraid me then good wife no more,
For first when I heard of thy name,
I knew thou hadst such words in store, 95
Would make the devil to think shame.

Forsooth Sir, theif you are to blame,
If I had time now to abide,
Once you were well but may think shame,

That lost heaven for rebellious pride; 100
 Who traitor fell like the rest
 Because you would not be content,
 And now of bliss are dispossessed,
 Without all grace for to repent,
 Thou mad'st poor Eve long since consent 105
 To eat of the forbidden tree
 (Which we her daughters may repent [sic]
 And made us always like to thee:
 But God be blest who pass'd thee by,
 And did a Saviour provide: 110
 For Adam's whole posterity,
 All those who do in him confide,
 Adieu! false friend, I may not abide,
 With thee I may no longer stay,
 My God, in death he was my guide, 115
 O'er hell I'll get the victory.

Then up the hill the poor wife went,
 Opprest with stinking flames and fear,
 Weeping right sore, with great resent,
 For to go else she wist not where: 120
 A narrow way with thorns and briars,
 And full of mires was her before;

he sigh'd oft with sobs and tears [sic],
 The poor wife's heart was wondrous sore.
 Tired and torn she went on still, 125
 Sometimes she sat and sometimes fell,
 Ay till she came to a high hill,
 And then she looked back to hell.

When she had climbed up the hill.
 Before her was a goodly plain, 130
 Where she did rest and weep her fill,
 Then rose and to her feet again.

Her heart was glad the way was good [sic]
 Up to the hill she hied with haste,
 The flowers were fair whereon she stood, 135
 The fields were pleasant to her taste

Then she beheld Jerusalem,
 On Sion's mount whereon it stood;
 Shining with gold, bright as the sun,

Her silly soul was very glad, 140
 The ports of orient pearls bright,
 Were very glorious to behold,
 The precious stones gave a pure light;
 The walls were of transparent gold,
 High were the walls, the gates were shut, 145
 And long she sought for to be in;
 But then for fear of biding out,
 She knocked hard and made some din.
 To knock and cry she did not spare,
 Till father Adam did her hear, 150
 Who is't that raps so rudely there?
 Heaven cannot well be won by weir.
 The wife of Beith since that you speer,
 Hath stood these two hours at the gate.
 Go back, quoth he, thou must forbear, 155
 Here may no sinners entrance get.
 Adam quoth she I shall be in,
 In spite of all such churls as thee,
 Thou'st the original of all sin,
 For eating of the forbidden tree; 160
 For which thou art not flyting free;
 But for thy soul offences fled.
 Adam went back and let her be.
 Looking as if his nose had bled.
 Then mother Eve did at him spier, 165
 Who was it there that made such din?
 He said a woman would be here,
 For me I durst not let her in.
 I'll go said she and ask her will,
 Her company I would have fain. 170
 But ay she cry'd and knocked still,
 And in no ways she would refrain.
 Daughter said Eve, you will do well,
 To come again another time:
 Heaven is not won by sword nor steel, 175
 Nor one that's guilty of a crime.
 Mother, said she the fault is thin [sic],
 That knocking here so long I staud [sic],
 Thy guilt is more than that of mine,

If thou wilt rightly understand, 180
 Thou wast the cause of all our sin,
 Wherein we were born and conceiv'd.
 Our misery did first begin,
 By thee thy husband was deceiv'd.
 Eve went back where Noah was, 185
 And told him all how she was blam'd.
 Of her sin and first trespass,
 Whereof she was so much asham'd
 Then Noah said, I will go down,
 And will forbid her that she knock; 190
 Go back, he said ye drunken lown;
 You're none of the celestial flock
 Noah, she said, hold thou thy peace.
 Where I drank ale, thou didst drink wine,
 Discover'd was to thy disgrace, 195
 When thou wast drunken like a swine:
 If I did drink, I learn'd at thee,
 For thou'rt the Father and the first,
 That others taught, and likewise me,
 To drink although we had no thirst. 200
 Then Noah turned back with speed,
 And told the Patriarch Abra'am then,
 How that the carling made him dread,
 And how she all his deeds did ken.
 Abra'am then said, Now get you gone, 205
 Let us no more hear of your din,
 No lying wife as I suppose,
 May enter here these gates within.
 Abra'am she said, will ye but spare,
 I hope you are not flyting free. 210
 You of yourself had such a care,
 Deny'd yourself, and made a lie:
 O then I pray let me be,
 For I repent of all my sin,
 Do thou but ope the gates to me, 215
 And let me quietly come in.
 Abra'am went back to Jacob then,
 And told his nephew how he sped,
 How that of her he nothing wan,

And that he thought the carling mad. 220
Then down came Jacob through the close,
And said, go backward down to hell.

Jacob, quoth she, I know thy voice,
That gate pertaineth to thy sel';
Of thy old trumperies I can tell, 225
Thou with two sisters led'st thy life,
And the third part of these tribes twelve,
Thou got with maids besides thy wife,
And stole thy father's bennison,
Only by fraud thy father frae; 230
Gave thou not him for venison,
A kid, instead of baken rae.

Jacob himself was tickled so,
He went to Lot where he was lying,
And to the gate pray'd him to go, 235
To staunch the carling of her crying.

Lot says, stop dame, make less ado,
And come again another day.

Old harlot carle, and drunkard too,
Thou with thine own two daughters lay, 240
Of thine untimely seed I say,
Proceeded never good but ill.

Poor Lot for shame then stole away,
And left the wife to knock her fill,
Meek Moses then went down at last, 245
To pacify the carling then;
Now dame, said he, knock not so fast,
Your knocking will not let you ben.

Good Sir, she said, I am aghast,
Whene'er I look you in the face; 250
If your law untill now had last,
Then surely I had ne'er got grace,
But Moses, Sir, now by your leave,
Although in heaven you're possest,
For all you saw did not belive [sic]; 255

But you in Horeb once transgrest,
Wherefore, by all it is confest,
You but got up the land to see,
And in the mount were put to rest,

Yea buried there where you did die. 260

Moses meekly turned back.
And told his brother Aaron there,
How the old carling did so crack,
And in no ways did him forbear.

Then Aaron said I will not swear, 265
But I'll conjure her as I can,
And I will make her to forbear,
So that she shall not rap again.

Then Aaron said, you whorish wife,
Go get you gone, and rap no more: 270
(With idols you have led your life,)
Or then you shall repent it sore.

Good Aaron priest, I know you well,
The golden calf you may remember,
Who made the people plagues to see, 275
This is of you recorded ever.
Your priesthood now is nothing worth,
Christ is my only Priest, and he,
My Lord, that will not keep me forth.
So I'll get in, in spite of thee. 280

Up started Samson at the last,
Unto the gate apace came he,
To drive away the wife with strength,
But all in vain, it would not be.
Samson quoth she the world may see, 285
Thou wast a judge that prov'd unjust,
Those precious gifts which God gave thee,
Thou lost by thy licentious lust,
From Delilah thy wicked wife
Thy secrets chief could not refrain, 290
She daily sought to take thy life.

Thou lost thy locks and thou wast slain,
Tho' thou wast strong it was in vain
Haunting with harlots here and there.
Then Sampson turned again, 295
And with the wife would melt nae mair.

Then said King David, knock nae mair,
We are all troubled with your cry.

David, quoth she, how camest thou there,
Thou might'st be out as well as I: 300
Thy deeds no ways thou canst deny,
Is not thy sin far worse than mine,
Who with Uriah's wife did ly,
And caused him to be murder'd syne.

Then Judith said, Who's there that knocks, 305
And to our neighbours gives those notes:
Madam, said she, let be your mocks,
I came not here for cutting throats;
I am a sinner full of blots,
Yet through Christ's blood I shall be clean. 310
If you and I be judg'd by votes,
The thing you did was worse than mine.

Then said the sapient Solomon,
Thou art a sinner all men say,
Therefore our Saviour I suppose, 315
Thee heavenly entrance will deny.

Mind, quoth she, thy latter days,
What idol gods thou didst upset,
And wast so lewd in Venus' plays,
Thou didst thy Maker quite forget. 320

Then Jonas said, Fair dame content you,
If you intent to come to grace
E'er you can come within this place

Jonas quoth she how stands the case;
How came you to be with Christ? 325
How dare you look him in the face?
Considering how you broke your tryst.

Good Jonas said, Crack on your fill,
For here I may no longer tarry;
Yet knock as long as ere you will, 330
And go into a firry farry.

Jonas, she says, ye do miscarry,
As I have done in former time,
Ye're not saint Peter nor Saint Mary, 335
Your blot's as black as ever mine.

So Jonas then he was asharn'd
Because he was not flyting free,
Of all his faults she had him blamed,
He left the wife and let her be. 340

Saint Thomas then I counsel thee,
Go speak unto yon wicked wife,
She shames us all, and as for me,
Her like I never heard in life.

Thomas then said you make such strife, 345
When you are out, and meikle din,
If ye were here I'll lay my life,
No peace the saints will get within,
It is your trade still to be flyting,
As one who in a fever raves, 350
No marvel that you wives be biting,
Your tongues were made of aspen leaves.

Thomas, quoth she, let be your taunts,
You play the pick hank I perceive,
Though you be brother'd 'mong the saints, 355
An unbelieving heart you have;
Thou brought the Lord unto the grave,
But would no more with him remain,
And were the last of all the lave,
That did believe he rose again, 360
There might no doctrine do thee good,
Nor miracles make thee confide,
Till thou beheld Christ's wounds and blood,
And put thy hand into his side.

Didst thou not daily with him bide, 365
And see the wonders which he wrought?
But blest are they who do confide,
And do believe yet saw him nought,
Thomas, she says, will ye but speer
If that my sister Magdalen, 370
Will come to me if she be here,
For comfort sure ye gave me nane,

He was so blyth he turned back,
And thanked God that he was gane,
He had no will to hear her crack, 375
But told it Mary Magdalen.

When that she heard her sister's mocks,
She went unto the gate with speed:
And asked her who's there that knocks?

'Tis I the wife of Beith indeed. 380
She said, good mistress you must stand,
Till you be tried by tribulation.

Sister, quoth she, give me your hand,
Are we not both of one vocation?
It is not through your occupation, 385
That you are placed so divine,
My faith is fixed on Christ's passion,
My soul shall be as safe as thine.

Then Mary went away in haste;
The carling made her so ashamed, 390
She had no will of such a guest,
To lose her pains and so be blamed:
Now good Saint Paul, said Magdalen,
Because you are a learned man,
Go and convince this woman then, 395
For I have done all that I can:
Sure if she were in hell I doubt,
They would not keep her longer there,
But to the gate would put her out;
And send her back to [be elsewhere? illeg.]. 400

Then went the good apostle Paul,
To put the wife in better tune,
Wash off that filth that fyles thy saul,
Then shall heaven's gates be open'd soon.

Remember Paul what thou hast done, 405
For all the epistles thou didst compile,
Though now thou sittest up aboon,
Thou persecutedst Christ a while.

Woman, he said, thou art not right,
That which I did I did not know, 410
But thou didst sin with all thy might,
Although the preachers did thee show,

Saint Paul, she said, it is not so,
I did not know so well as ye;
But I will to my Saviour go, 415
Who will his favour show to me.
You think you are not flyting free,
Because you are wrapt up above,
But yet it was Christ's grace to thee,
And matchlessness of his dear love. 420

Then Paul, says she, let Peter come,
If he be lying let him rise,
To him I will confess my sin,
And let him quickly bring the keys,
Too long I stand, he'll let me in, 425
For why I cannot longer tarry,
Then shall ye all be quit of din,
For I must speak with good Saint Mary.

The good apostle discontent,
Right suddenly he did turn back, 430
For he did very much repent,
To hear the carling proudly crack.

Paul says, good brother now arise,
And make an end of all this din:
And if so be you have the keys, 435
Open, and let the carling in.

The apostle Peter rose at last,
And to the gate with speed he hies,
Woman, quoth he, knock not so fast,
You cumber Mary with your cries. 440

Peter, she said, let Christ arise,
And grant me mercy in my need,
For why I ne'er deny'd him thrice,
As thou thyself hast done indeed.

Thou carling bold, what's that to thee? 445
I got remission for my sin;
It cost many sad tears to me,
Before I enter'd here within:
It will not be thy meikle din,
Will cause heaven's gates opened be, 450
Thou must be purified from sin,
And of all trespasses made free.

Saint Peter then no thanks to you,
That so you were rid of your fears.
It was Christ's gracious look I trow, 455
That made you weep those precious tears.
The door of mercy is not clos'd,
I may get grace as well as ye,
It is not so far as ye suppos'd,
I will be in, in spite of thee. 460

But wicked wife it is too late,
 Thou should'st have mourned upon earth,
 Repentance now is out of date;
 It should have been before thy death:
 Thou mightest then have turned wrath, 465
 To mercy then and mercy got,
 But now the Lord is very leath,
 And all thy cries not worth a jot.

Ah! Peter then what shall I do?
 He will not hear me, as I fear, 470
 Shall I despair of mercy too!
 No, no, I'll trust in mercy dear:
 And never go from heaven bright,
 And if I perish here I'll stay,
 I'll ever hope and always pray. 475
 Until I get my Saviour's sight.

I think indeed now you are right,
 If ye had faith you could win in;
 Importunate then with all your might,
 Faith is the feet wherewith ye come; 480
 It is the hands will hold him fast,
 But weak faith never may presume;
 'Twill let you sink and be aghast,
 Strongly believe or you're undone.

But good Saint Peter let me be, 485
 Had you such faith did it abound,
 When you did walk upon the sea,
 Were you not likely to be drown'd?
 Had not your Saviour helped thee,
 Who came and took thee by the hand, 490
 So can my Lord do unto me,
 And bring me to the promised land,
 Is my faith weak? yet he is still
 The same, and ever shall remain;
 His mercies last, and his good-will, 495
 To bring me to his flock again,
 He will me help and me relieve,
 And will when increase my faith also;
 If weakly I can but believe,
 For from this place I'll never go. 500

But Peter said how can that be?
How darest thou look him in the face,
Sure horrid sinners like to thee,
Can have no courage to get grace;
Here none comes in but they who're stout, 505
And suffer'd have for the good cause;
Like unto thee are kept out,
For thou hast broke all Moses' laws.

Peter, she said, I do appeal,
From Moses and from thee also, 510
With him and you I'll not prevail,
But to my Saviour I will go;
Indeed of old you were right stout,
When you cut off Malchus' ear,
But after that you went about, 515
And a poor maiden did you fear.
Wherefore Saint Peter do forbear,
A comforter indeed you're not,
Let me alone, I do not fear,
Take home the wissel of your groat; 520
Was it your own or Paul's good sword,
When that your courage was so keen,
You were right stout upon my word,
When you would fain at fishing been,
For ere the crowing of the cock, 525
You did deny your master thrice,
For all your stoutness turn'd a block,
Now flyte no more, if you be wise.

Yet at the last the Lord arose
Environed with angels bright, 530
And to the wife in haste he goes,
Desir'd her to pass out of sight

O Lord, quoth she, cause do me right,
But not according to my sin,
Have you not promis'd day and night, 535
When sinners knock to let them in.

He said, thou wrests the scripture wrong,
The night is come, thou spent'st the day,
In whoredom thou hast lived long,
And to repent thou didst delay, 540

Still my commandments thou abus'd,
And vice committed'st busily,
Since now my mercy thou refus'd,
Go down to hell eternally.

O Lord, my soul doth testify, 545
That I have spent my life in vain,
Ah! make a wandering sheep of me,
And bring me to thy flock again.

Think'st thou there is no count to crave,
Of all these gifts in thee was planted, 550
I gave thee beauty 'boon the lave,
A pregnant wit thou never wanted.

Master, quoth she, it must be granted,
My sins are great: grant me contrition:
The forlorn son when he repented, 555
Obtain'd his father's full remission.

I spared my judgments many times,
And spiritual pastors did thee send;
But thou renew'd thy former crimes,
Ay more and more me to offend. 560

My Lord, quoth she, I do amend,
Lamenting for my former vice;
The poor thief at the latter end,
For one word went to Paradise.

The thief heard never of my teachings, 565
My heavenly precepts and my laws;
But thou wast daily at my preachings,
Both heard and saw and yet misknows.

Master, quoth she, the scripture shows,
The Jewish woman who play'd the lown, 570
Conform unto the Hebrew laws,
Was brought to thee to be put down,
But nevertheless thou let her go,
And made the Pharisees afraid,

Indeed, says Christ, it was right so, 575
And then my bidding was obeyed.

Woman, he said, I may not cast,
The children's bread to dogs like thee,
Although my mercies still do last,
There's mercy here but none for thee, 580

But loving lord, may I presume,
Poor worm that I may speak again,
The dogs for hunger were undone,
And of the crumbs they were right fain.
Grant me one crumb then doth fall 585
From thy blest children's table Lord.
That I may be refresh'd withal,
It will me help enough afford.

The gates of mercy now are closed,
And thou canst hardly enter in; 590
It is not so as ye supposed,
For thou art deadly sick in sin.
'Tis true indeed, my Lord most meek,
My sore and sickness I do feel,
Yet thou the lame didst truly seek, 595
Who lay long at Bethseda's pool,
Of many that thee never sought;
Like to the poor Samaritan;
Whom thou into thy fold hast brought,
Even as thou didst the widow of Nain, 600
Most gracious God, didst thou not bid,
All that are weary come to thee,
Behold I come! even overload
With sin, have mercy upon me.
The issues of thy soul are great, 605
Thou art both leprous and unclean,
To be with me thou art unfit,
Go from me then, let me alone.

Let me thy garments once but touch,
My bloody issue shall be whole, 610
It will not cost thee very much,
To save a poor distressed soul,
Speak thou the word, I shall be whole,
One look of thee shall do me good
Save now good Lord, my silly soul 615
Bought with thine own most precious blood.
Let me alone, none of my blood,
Was ever shed for such as thee,
It was my mercy, patience good,
Which from damnation made thee free. 620

It is confest thou hadst been just,
 Although thou hadst condemned me,
 But oh! thy mercies still do last,
 To save the soul that trusts in thee.
 Let me not then condemned be, 625
 Most humbly, Lord, I thee request,
 Of sinners all none like to me,
 So much the more thy praise shall last.
 Thy praising me is not perfite,
 My saints shall praise me evermore; 630
 In sinners I have no delight,
 Such sacrifice I do abhor.

Then she unto the Lord did say,
 At footstool of thy grace I'll lie,
 Sweet Lord my God, say me not nay, 635
 For if I perish, here I'll die.

Poor silly woman, speak no more,
 Thy faith, poor soul, hath saved thee,
 Enter thou into thy glore,
 And rest through all eternity. 640

As soon's our Saviour these words said,
 A long white robe to her was given,
 And then the angels did her lead,
 Forthwith within the gates of heaven:
 A laurel crown set on her head, 645
 Spangled with rubies and with gold,
 A bright white palm she also had,
 Glorious it was for to behold;
 Her face did shine like to the sun,
 Like threads of gold her hair hung down, 650
 Her eyes like lamps nuto the moon [sic]
 Of precious stones rich was her crown;
 Angels and saints did welcome her,
 The heavenly choir did sing, "Rejoice;"
 King David with his harp was there, 655
 The silver bells made a great noise.
 Such music and such melody,
 Was never either heard or seen,
 When this poor saint was placed so high,
 And of all sins made freely clean: 660

But then when thus she was possest,
And looked back on all her fears:
And that she was come to her rest,
Freed from her sins and all her tears.
She from her head did take the crown,
Giving all praise to Christ on high,
And at his feet she laid it down,
Because the lamb had made her free,
Now she doth sing triumphantly,
And shall rejoice for evermore,
O'er death and hell victoriously,
With lasting pleasures laid in store.

665

670

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The *North Carolina Folklore Journal* publishes studies of North Carolina folklore and folklife, analyses of the use of folklore in literature, and articles whose rigorous methodology or innovative approach is pertinent to local folklife study. Manuscripts should conform to *The MLA Style Manual*. Quotations from oral narratives should be transcriptions of spoken texts and should be identified by teller, place, and date.



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Vol. 35, No. 2 Summer-Fall 1988

CONTENTS

The Brown-Hudson Award.....	79
Lauchlin Shaw, <i>Wayne Martin</i>	84
Thomas Burt, <i>Glenn Hinson</i>	87
Bertha Mangum Landis, <i>Daniel Patterson</i>	90
The Badgett Sisters, <i>Margaret Martin</i>	92
Eva Wolfe, <i>Molly Blankenship</i>	95
Ernest East, <i>Andy Cahan</i>	97
Guy Benton Johnson, <i>Lynn Moss Sanders</i>	99
Leonidas Judd Betts, Jr., <i>Thomas McGowan</i>	101
“On Being”: Tom Davenport’s North Carolina Films, <i>Keith Cunningham</i>	103
Joy in the Coming Home: A Review of <i>Doc and Merle</i> , <i>W.H. Ward</i>	109
Book Review: <i>Diversities of Gifts</i> <i>Howard Dorgan</i>	114

Why Jesse Fought for Both Sides: Family Anecdotes from the Civil War,
Karen D. Hatton118

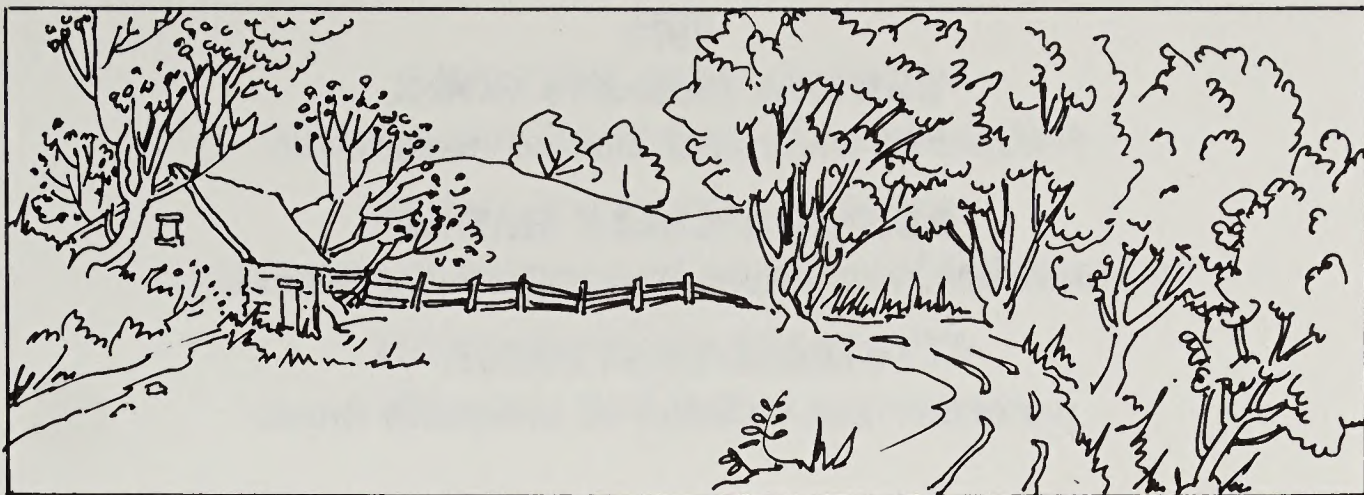
Tying Tales: Oxen in North Carolina Folk Culture,
Jochen Welsch124

Medieval vs. Modern: Anecdotes from the Society for Creative Anachronisms,
Christopher J. Lucht133

Corn Shucking: A Way to Work and Play,
Christopher S. Stepp138

Illustrator: *Norma Farthing Murphy*

Cover: Traditional basketmaker Eva Wolfe of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee was the recipient of a 1988 Brown-Hudson Folklore Award. Photograph courtesy of the Indian Crafts Board, U.S. Department of Interior.



The Brown-Hudson Folklore Award

The Brown-Hudson Award was established in 1970 to honor two distinguished folklorists and members of the North Carolina Folklore Society, the late Frank C. Brown and the late Arthur Palmer Hudson. Both had served as the Society's Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Brown from 1913 to 1944 and Dr. Hudson from 1945 to 1966. Dr. Hudson was also the founder and editor until 1966 of *North Carolina Folklore*. Our state's highest folklore prize, the award recognizes a resident or native of North Carolina who has contributed in a special way to the appreciation of regional traditions.

At its 1987 meeting in Raleigh, the Society presented Brown-Hudson Folklore Awards to Bertha Mangum Landis, Lauchlin Shaw, Thomas Burt, and Leonidas Betts, Jr. During the Brown-Hudson Reunion concert in Boone in April 1988, the Badgett Sisters, Eva Wolfe, Ernest East, Guy Benton Johnson, and Thomas McGowan received the award. Citations for their awards follow this listing of past recipients.

1971

LUCY CALISTA MORGAN

director of the Penland School of Crafts

PAUL GREEN

playwright, teacher, and collector of local tales

GEORGE P. WILSON

professor and folklorist

1972

ARTUS MONROE MOSER

collector, folk musician, and singer

MARY MYRTLE CORNWELL

promoter of folk crafts

JOSEPH D. CLARK

folklorist and professor

1973

BERTHA HODGES COOK

maker of traditional knotted bedspreads

BERNICE KELLY HARRIS

journalist, playwright, and collector of folklore

VIRGIL L. STURGIL

performer and collector of mountain music

1974

W. AMOS ABRAMS

professor, editor, and collector of folklore

EDD & NETTIE PRESNELL

dulcimer maker & singer of folksongs

BENJAMIN E. WASHBURN

writer, historian, and folklore collector

1975

RICHARD WALSER

writer, editor, and folklorist

CRATIS D. WILLIAMS

teacher, writer, and performer of ballads

DOC & MERLE WATSON

folk singers and musicians

1976

RUTH JEWELL

teacher and promoter of folk dance

F. ROY JOHNSON

writer and publisher of folklore books

JOHN PARRIS

journalist and collector of folklore

1977

GUY OWEN

novelist and poet, teacher, editor, and folklorist

KAY WILKINS

teacher and promoter of folk dance

JAMES & LESSIE YORK

performers and collectors of folk music

1978

GRAYDEN & M. C. PAUL

collectors and interpreters of coastal folklife

LEONA TRANTHAM HAYES

organizer of festivals and promoter of folk dance

HERMAN & MABEL ESTES

craftspeople and festival organizers

1979

DOROTHY COLE AUMAN

folk potter and scholar of regional pottery traditions

THAD STEM, JR.

writer and folklorist

ROGERS V. WHITENER

writer, teacher, and folklorist

1980

BURLON CRAIG

folk potter

STANLEY HICKS

instrument maker, storyteller, folk musician & dancer

DANIEL WATKINS PATTERSON

teacher, writer, and folklorist

1981

THOMAS JEFFERSON JARRELL

folk fiddler and teacher

**MARY MINTZ, ELIZABETH ROBERSON,
RICHARD LEOVITZ, & THEIR STUDENTS**

teachers, writers, and collectors of folklore

1982

ETTA BAKER & CORA PHILLIPS

folk musicians

OVID WILLIAMS

writer and teacher

HOLGER OLOF NYGARD

writer, teacher, and folklorist

1983

ORA WATSON

quilt maker

WILLARD WATSON

toy maker, storyteller, and folk craftsman

JOSEPH THOMAS WILSON

organizer of festivals and promoter of folk music

1984

LILLIE LEE

quilt maker

JENNIE BURNETT

quilt maker

EMMA DUPREE

practioner of folk medicine and herbalist

F. BORDEN MACE

publisher and promoter of folklore study

1985

BERTIE CAUDILL DICKENS

traditional banjo player

ARTHUR JAMES WOOTEN

traditional mountain fiddler

RAY HICKS

storyteller

GEORGE MAHON HOLT

festival organizer and public programs administrator

1986

ADOLPH DIAL

Lumbee scholar, tradition bearer, and teacher

BETTY DUPREE

folk arts promoter and crafts guild director

1987

BERTHA MANGUM LANDIS

church singer and mother of a family gospel tradition

LAUHLIN SHAW

traditional fiddler and promoter of oldtime music gatherings

THOMAS BURT

blues guitarist

LEONIDAS JUDD BETTS, JR.

folklorist, editor, and family tradition bearer

1988

THE BADGETT SISTERS:

**CELESTER SELLARS, CONNIE STEADMAN, &
CLEONIA GRAVES**

singers of spirituals & Jubilee gospel, family tradition bearers

EVA WOLFE

maker of traditional Cherokee baskets

ERNEST EAST

traditional fiddler and stringband leader

GUY BENTON JOHNSON

scholar, teacher, & collector of folksongs

THOMAS McGOWAN

folklorist, journal editor, & Society Secretary-Treasurer

Lauchlin Shaw

For at least as far back as the development of the commercial radio and record industries in the 1920s, traditional Southern fiddling has come to be generally labeled as hillbilly or mountain music. These terms are not complete misnomers, as there are scores of remarkable fiddlers from communities in the mountains and the foothills of the South. However, the term mountain or hillbilly music does not recognize the existence of regional fiddling styles from the piedmont and coast, which have flourished for generations.

Today we are fortunate to have the opportunity to honor one of the most gifted and influential fiddlers from eastern North Carolina, Lauchlin Shaw of Harnett County. Lauchlin was born, raised, and continues to live in the community of Anderson Creek, which is located in an area considered to be neither fully piedmont nor coast, but designated as the Sandhills.

Lauchlin's great-grandfather came to the Anderson Creek township around 1830, emigrating from the Isle of Jura off Scotland's coast. His occupation as a farmer, as well as the actual land he cultivated, has since been passed from father to son through three generations of Shaws. Today, Lauchlin still raises some of the fattest beef cattle and juiciest watermelons in Harnett County.

Yet in addition to finding farming in his blood, Lauchlin also inherited a love and talent for old-time fiddle music. He began playing fiddle for square dances with his father and brothers in 1925 when he was thirteen years old. The family fiddled standards like "Mississippi Sawyer," "Red Wing," and "Soldier's Joy." They also played beautiful regional tunes such as "Little Moses," "Sally with the Rundown Shoe," "Dancing Ladies," and "Fayetteville Quickstep."

He began his music-making at home, but it was not long before he began traveling to other communities in the piedmont, visiting musicians and adding to what today comprises a huge repertoire of tunes. He learned from players such as Sampson Williams, Archie Clark, Lauchlin Bethune, the Faucett brothers and Virgil Craven—fiddlers about whom little has been written, but who were recognized by their peers throughout the piedmont as wonderful musicians. Lauchlin sought out these fiddlers and through his own extraordinary ear for music, learned many of their regional tunes.

However, what is important is not only that Lauchlin preserved these tunes, but that he preserved them through his own beautiful playing. In my mind, his fiddling conjures up the image of a fountain, spraying not water, but a graceful stream of melody notes. His exuberant playing and finely-crafted versions of tunes reveal a deep love for the music and respect for the art of fiddling.



Lauchlin Shaw (l) and Fred Olsen play at the Shaw home, Harnett County, N.C., 11 August 1987. Photo by Anne Kimsey.

On numerous occasions Lauchlin has taken his music outside the Sandhills. He has been a featured performer at many regional folk festivals and at the 1984 World's Fair in Knoxville, and he has twice won the championship of the Senior Division at the contest held at Union Grove, North Carolina. Thousands of North Carolina schoolchildren have listened to him fiddle as part of the the N.C. Folk Artist in Schools Program. Still, most often his music is heard in and around Harnett County. On any given weekend of the year you might find Lauchlin playing at a birthday party for a neighbor, at a community picnic, or at a get-together in the fellowship hall after church.

Yet without doubt, some of the most exciting music Lauchlin makes is in his home, or more specifically, his old home. Every couple of months or so the Shaws host a music party in the old homeplace, which has been the site for so much of the music-making in Lauchlin's life. At these parties local friends, neighbors, and musicians come out in force to feast on Mary Lilly Shaw's renowned chicken slick, eat barbeque and homemade cakes and pies, and listen and dance to the music of Lauchlin and his friends.

Graciously, Lauchlin and Mary Lilly always make a special effort to invite interested folks from outside the surrounding communities. Guests from

towns and cities not only in North Carolina but from throughout the eastern states have cut their teeth on old-time music at the Shaw homeplace. Revivalist musicians have a chance to learn tunes, copy playing techniques, and get advice and encouragement from Lauchlin. As important, these get-togethers are for many of us a rare opportunity to hear traditional music as it has been heard for generations—as a natural and unpretentious part of a community celebration.

Lauchlin's hospitality and generosity have been extended to scores of neighbors, musicians, researchers, and folklorists. Yet talented and accomplished as he is as a musician, he never attempts to push himself out front or tries to garner praise or attention. For these reasons he has come to be known among young players as Lauchlin Shaw—"Gentleman Fiddler." It is an apt and well-deserved title.

In preparing these remarks about Lauchlin, I asked him if there was anything specific that he wanted me to say. The statement he made is worth mentioning here; he said that he "played because he loved music and not because of money." Nor, would I add, does he play because of a desire for prestige or recognition by others. However, I hope that you will indulge us today, Lauchlin, when we accord you some formal recognition that is due you. As North Carolinians, we are proud of your artistry as a traditional fiddler. We are indebted to you for you have introduced us to some of the beautiful music traditions of eastern Carolina. We thank you not only for making the effort to take your music out of the Sandhills to wider audiences, but also for inviting us into your home to hear and enjoy such fine fiddling. It is with great pleasure that the North Carolina Folklore Society presents you with the Brown-Hudson Award.

—Wayne Martin
Folklife Section
N.C. Arts Council

“I’ve Played My Plenty”: Thomas Burt and the Carolina Blues

When folklorists talk about “traditional” music, they tend to think of musical forms whose lyrics and melodies owe a debt to generations of community performance. One need only consider the historical scholarship on ballads, string band traditions, African American spirituals, and worksongs to see what effort has been expended towards establishing these forms’ distinctive pedigrees—pedigrees which in every case stretch back at least to the early nineteenth century. For many decades now, blues have also held a place on this list. Yet the blues stand in a class apart, for despite popular mythologizing about antebellum origins, they in fact date only to the early decades of this century. This relatively late beginning was later matched by a correspondingly early demise. By the 1950s, the blues had begun to lose their base of community support; within twenty years, they had become the exclusive province—except in few selected regions of the country—of community elders.¹

When changing times wrought their change in popular tastes, many blues artists laid down their instruments. No longer were their performances in demand at houseparties and dances; no longer were young musicians carrying the tradition on. Yet a number of singers chose to hold onto their music, keeping it alive in the close community of family and friends. Among those who made this decision was guitarist and songster Thomas Burt.

Thomas Burt is one of the few artists still active in North Carolina who can claim participation in the full scope of blues history. Born to a sharecropping family at the turn of the century, Burt grew up in an environment filled with music. His father regularly played accordion for local “set” dances, his mother accompanied her workaday chores with sacred song, and a host of kinsfolk dropped by on weekends to play country “reels” on banjo and fiddle. By his tenth birthday, Burt had learned to pick a few tunes on a friend’s homemade banjo. Soon thereafter, he joined the community music making, earning a place alongside his father at community corn shucking and Christmas-time dances.

Burt’s mother, however, voiced strong disapproval of such activity. Convinced that the banjo was the “devil’s box,” she repeatedly told her son that its mastery was a certain road to perdition. These warnings were not lost on the impressionable young Burt, who decided that his soul was more important than the stringed box and eventually laid the banjo aside. Yet Burt’s

love for music was not so easily quenched. In the ensuing few years, he tried his hand at piano, organ, fiddle, autoharp, and finally guitar. "I used to could tune my guitar in the tuning of a banjo, and *play*," he recalls, telling of performing at local frolic dances. "I'd play it just like a banjo, only I'd pick it. And they'd kick up and cut up just like it was a banjo."² But while Burt was still picking reels for square dances, he began to hear a new type of music, a quieter, slower form that stressed poetic statement and made the guitar a lead instrument. Folks called this new music "the blues."

Burt and his guitar-playing peers (who by this time included two sisters and two brothers) quickly mastered the new style, and were soon inserting blues between "barndance" sets at the local frolics. Picking in the light, two-fingered style characteristic of the Southern seaboard, Burt and his siblings played throughout Granville and Durham counties. By the early 1930s, when the blues community in the Bull City began to blossom, Burt turned his performative interest towards the city. Performing at houseparties and warehouses alongside such local masters as Sonny Terry, Blind Boy Fuller, and Blind Gary Davis, he became an active player in Durham's highly creative musical community. By day, he sawed wood, laid track, built railroad bridges, or worked the golden leaf in American Tobacco's "Bull" factory; by night and on weekends, he built a reputation as one of the city's finest bluesmen.

By the late 1940s, the vernacular popularity of the older blues styles had begun to wane; increasingly, the ragtimey guitar traditions of the Piedmont were being replaced by the electric blues sounds of the urban North and the nascent rumblings of rhythm and blues. By now married and living on a Granville County farm, Burt simply decided to stop "playing out," choosing instead to limit his performing to his immediate circle of friends. This remained his central performative sphere for the next three decades, as he kept the reels, blues, and early gospel songs alive in the intimacy of his home.

In 1978, at the urging of local folklorists, Thomas Burt reentered the public arena, where he quickly reestablished himself as one of the state's most eloquent bluesmen. Since that time, he has carried his uniquely vibrant sound to a range of prestigious stages, including the 1980 National Folk Festival and the 1984 National Downhome Blues Festival (for which he was the only artist chosen from the Carolinas). In recent months, however, Thomas Burt's playing has slowed down, as age and ill health begin to take their subtle toll. Though his delivery remains compelling and his fingerpicking fluent, he rarely turns to the guitar anymore. "As the old saying is 'I've played my plenty,' " he says. "I've been playing [guitar] since I was about fourteen, and I've made some kind of music in my life. Now I guess it's time to lay it down, and let someone else take over."³

For generations, Thomas Burt's singing and playing have contributed to the musical soundscape of North Carolina. It is only fitting that the North

Carolina Folklore Society now recognize this longstanding contribution and pay homage to Burt's artistic tenacity and creative excellence with the Brown-Hudson Award.

—Glenn D. Hinson
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill

NOTES

1. Although the blues still remain a vibrant, community-based form in some regions of the South and urban North, they have largely been replaced by other tradition-based musics. Perhaps the closest contemporary correlate—at least in terms of poetic complexity and vernacular creativity—is rap.

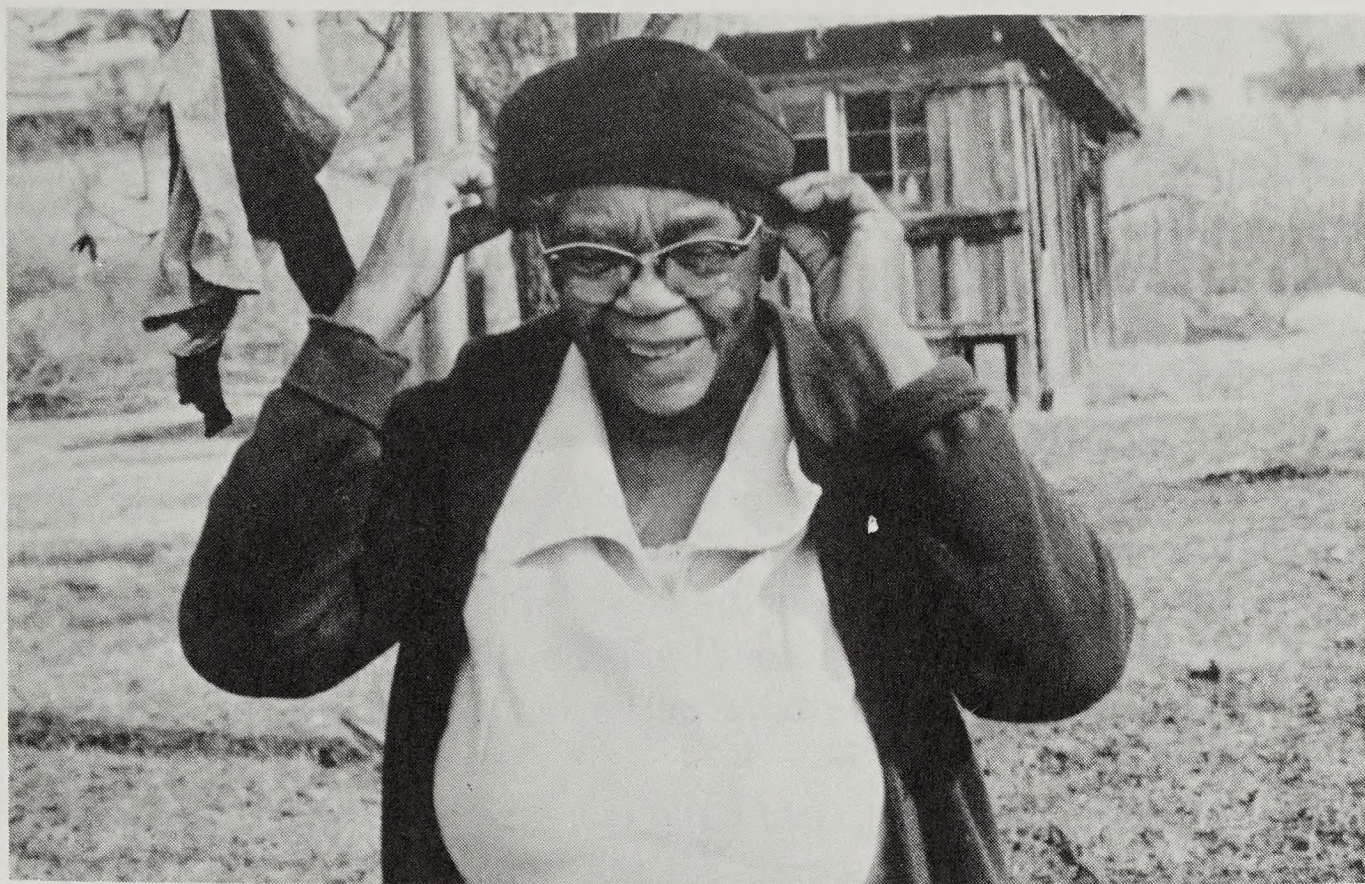
2. Thomas Burt, personal interview, Creedmoor, N.C. 26 October 1976.

3. Thomas Burt, personal interview, Creedmoor, N.C. 5 August 1987.

Bertha Mangum Landis

In the 1930s Mrs. Bertha Mangum Landis was a young woman with a growing family living on a tenant farm in Granville County, North Carolina. Those were hard years everywhere, but especially for farm families, and most of all if they were black. She herself had had to give up her dream of getting a college education when her mother died and she saw that her father and the younger children needed her. But holding a dream and helping others were part of her character. She dreamed of owning her own farm, and in the late 1930s she and her husband Coy Landis seized an opportunity to compete for a federal loan, were one of only ten families in Granville County to be approved for the loan, and successfully bought their farm. They later used their good fortune to help other black families become homeowners too.

With music Mrs. Landis also held a dream and found a way to help others. She saw that her children were unusually gifted. They could already carry a tune before they could even talk much. Mrs. Landis was herself an active member of her church choir, and she knew her father and uncles were also gifted. As young men they had played musical instruments and provided the entertainment music in their community. Later, after joining the church, they became shape-note singing teachers, and Mrs. Landis had assisted her father in this work. She recognized what she calls "a singing stream" in her family, musical talent that flowed from generation to generation. So she began to give her children regular training in singing—teaching them the songs she knew, and showing them how to harmonize and sing in parts. At night the children would often sing from bedroom to bedroom upstairs, keeping her husband awake after a hard day's work. "Don't fuss at them," she would say. "They may be great singers some day." And many of them did become wonderful singers, both in church and gospel groups that performed more broadly. From the 1940s on, first her sons and now her grandchildren have been leading singers and musicians wherever they live. The amateur and semi-professional groups members of her family have sung with have included The Rising Stars of Creedmoor, the Sewanee Larks and the Echoes of Heaven of Akron, Ohio, the Carolina Skyways of Wake Forest, and best-known of all, The Golden Echoes of Franklinton. Virtually every week for the past forty years, members of Mrs. Landis's family have been singing in public somewhere in Granville County, adjacent cities, or even in concerts as distant as Ohio or Pennsylvania, or Connecticut. Through phonograph albums the Golden Echoes have been heard nationwide, and they, other members of the family, and Mrs. Landis herself also have a national audience through a documentary film made this past year under the title *A Singing Stream*.



Bertha Mangum Landis at home, Creedmoor, N.C. Photo by Tom Davenport Films.

Mrs. Landis encouraged the musical gifts of her children because she wanted them to be involved in something worthwhile, something that would bring them pleasure in life. Through music they learned discipline, self-confidence, cooperation, family loyalty, and Christian values. They gained qualities of character that would enable them to take advantage of opportunities as the local economy improved after World War II and as the Civil Rights Movement removed barriers to black advancement. And their music making has enriched not only themselves but also their community.

So the North Carolina Folklore Society wishes to honor Mrs. Bertha Mangum Landis for her vision and achievement, and to honor the “singing stream” of all her family, and through Mrs. Landis and her family to honor also the thousands of other black families who with their rich tradition of religious song have contributed so much to the musical life of their churches, the black community, and the state of North Carolina.

—*Daniel Patterson*
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill

The Badgett Sisters

The Badgett Sisters of Caswell County, North Carolina—Cleona Graves, Celester Sellers, and Connie Stedman—are honored here today for their efforts in preserving an important part of our state's cultural heritage. They sing gospel music in the jubilee style of fifty years ago, as they learned it from their father. They sing for family and friends, church members, festival-goers and concert attenders, school children, and prisoners.

Their singing compels an emotional response from their listeners, no matter who or when or where. It is not a matter of nostalgia or an admiration of a forgotten folk art. I have seen the power of their singing work as nonchalant teenagers, classically trained musicians, and people from foreign countries begin to sway in time to the music and clap their hands. I've seen the members of their home church, Graves Chapel Baptist, pick up the familiar refrains of their songs and build to a communal crescendo. People become involved with their singing. There is something about their sound that rings true.

The Badgett Sisters carry on a family tradition, but it's very much a living tradition, fixed in a rapidly changing community. Their singing comes out of experiences that are common to many of us. They have seen their children leave home for faraway places, have worked through the problems of integration and the declining rural economy and changing values and lifestyles. Yet in the midst of this change, the mainstay of the traditional rural black community, the church, continues to thrive.

The power of gospel singing comes from the church and the church, in turn, is inspired by a tradition of singing that stretches back to the earliest congregations of Afro-American worshipers. In the nineteenth century, black church songs came to be known as spirituals. They were sung unaccompanied, with hand-clapping or foot-tapping for rhythm. In this century, smaller choirs, quartets and trios developed intricate close harmony parts to traditional sacred songs in a style popularized by the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Across North Carolina, many church singers were inspired to form their own jubilee style groups.

In Caswell County in the 1930s Cortelyou O. Badgett, a deacon at Mineral Springs Baptist Church, sang bass with the Silvertone Quartet, the first formal jubilee quartet in that area. He and his wife Caroline raised their eight children to sing in the jubilee tradition. The oldest son, Cortelyou, Jr., sister Ella, and five-year-old Cleo sang with their father during the Depression years at church meetings and local community events. In 1945, younger sisters Connie and Celester began singing with the family.

Practice sessions were strict. The children were expected to stand straight, hands clasped behind the back, and to dress nicely. Mr. Badgett believed



The Badgett Sisters of Yanceyville, N.C. (Connie Stedman, Celester Sellers, and Cleona Graves). Photograph by Roger Manley.

in close harmony and well-defined parts. The Sisters remember working hard on some of his favorite songs, like “In the Garden,” “Jesus Is All the World to Me,” and “Roll Away, Jordan.”

He admired good music in whatever form it might take and encouraged his daughters to listen to the Grand Ole Opry radio program from Nashville. He appreciated the harmonies of Bill Monroe & the Bluegrass Boys and the Chuck Wagon Gang, and he never missed a Lawrence Welk program. The Badgett family performed off and on through the 1970s at community and church gatherings.

In 1978 Glenn Hinson arranged to record them for the album *Eight-Hand Sets and Holy Steps*, a part of the North Carolina Museum of History exhibit “The Black Presence in North Carolina.” Two months before the studio session, Cortelyou Badgett passed away. The sisters decided to continue singing, even to keep the studio session date, rearranging the songs for three

parts instead of four. The album cut, "Traveling Shoes," was a fine tribute to their years of singing together.

In the last ten years, their music has become known to a wider audience. They participated in the 1978 North Carolina Folklife Festival, the Folk Arts in the Schools program, the British-American Festival at Duke University in 1984, the North Carolina Black Folk Heritage Tour, and the National Black Heritage Tour in 1986. They have never been too busy to work on their own county's celebrations, to drive across the state to sing for a benefit, to write songs about personal struggles. In 1987 they recorded and produced an album of their own, dedicated to their father. It's called *The Voice That Refused to Die*. One song in particular on that album strikes me with the conviction of its performance. It's not a really old song, but it says something about the experiences of the singers who perform it:

I ain't no ways tired.

I've come too far from where I started from.

Nobody told me that the road would be easy.

I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me.

To the Badgett sisters—Connie Stedman, Celester Sellers, and Cleo Graves—today we honor the dedication, the talent, and the conviction with which you sing. We thank you for touching our lives with your music, and for sharing the living tradition of gospel singing with all of us. The North Carolina Folklore Society is proud to present to you the Brown-Hudson Award.

—Margaret Martin
Chapel Hill

Eva Wolfe: Traditional Basketweaver

Mrs. Eva Wolfe, a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, is one of the most widely known creative basketmakers in the United States today. As a young girl, she first learned how to make baskets from her mother, who came from a family of traditional basketweavers.

Eva's interest in basketry arts was further kindled by training gained in basketweaving classes offered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs School, which served Indian students on the Cherokee Indian Reservation, where she first became interested in the double weave technique.

Today Eva specializes in double weave baskets, although she is accomplished in all forms of woven rivercane baskets. The doubleweave is one unbroken interlacing, eventually becoming one basket inside another. Sometimes she works with as many as 120 cane splits simultaneously in making one basket. The U.S. Department of the Interior, in an exhibition in 1968, conferred a first place award on one of Eva's doubleweave baskets. This award climaxed a succession of honors won by Eva in annual Cherokee contests on the Reservation. Shortly after receiving the award, she lost interest in basketweaving because of the illness and death of her father. But in 1977 Eva's desire to continue her basketweaving was rekindled by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The double weave baskets produced as a result of this grant were presented in several exhibitions around the country, including one at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Sometimes Eva spends whole days weaving, sometimes only half a day, and sometimes not at all, depending on the demands of her family and other activities. In April, usually, she and her husband, Amble, make their first trip to Hayesville, North Carolina, a distance of eighty miles, where they gather a truckload of cane, enough to last three months. In April also, she gathers her yearly supply of bloodroot, a plant indigenous to the slopes of her home, which makes the reddish-brown dye she uses in her baskets. The butternut tree roots, which she uses for a dark brown dye, can be gathered whenever she needs them, also in the vicinity of her home. In summer, Eva dyes her cane basket material outside in a washtub; in winter, she dyes inside a canner on a wood heater.

Eva uses only three simple tools in her art: a bush knife for cutting the cane; a hunting knife, whose handle has been well padded with black tape to prevent blistering of her hands and whose blade is worn through the years of usage for "busting" of the cane; and a pocket knife for scraping the strips. Each stalk of cane yields four strips for weaving. These Eva keeps pliable by dipping frequently in water.

Eva was born in the Soco Community of the Cherokee Indian Reservation on July 24, 1922, and moved to her present home in the Big Cove Community when she married. She and Amble have eleven children, four girls and seven boys, none of whom are practicing her craft.

Eva became a member of Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc., an Indian crafts cooperative at Cherokee, soon after it was organized. She says the sales of her baskets through this organization have done much to help her family enjoy a better way of life.

Tonight we recognize Mrs. Wolfe's lifetime of fine craftsmanship and loyalty to the traditions of her people. The North Carolina Folklore Society is delighted to present the Brown-Hudson Folklore Award to Eva Wolfe.

Molly Blankenship
N.C. Arts Council

Ernest East: Reflections on and by a Pine Ridge Boy

In the spring of 1979 I was 21, trying to play the banjo and about to complete a degree at Oberlin College. Mountain music had been my main interest since the age of 15, and my musical odyssey had so far been guided by young northeastern musicians like myself, infrequent music trips to the South, and County Records. During that spring of 1979 I had the good fortune to meet Ernest East at the Lowgap Fiddler's Convention. That night would become a turning point: I would accept an invitation to join Ernest's band, The Pine Ridge Boys and Patsy; decide to move south as soon as school let out; and begin a brand new education.

Taking in a banjo-picker from outside of the region was nothing new to Ernest East. There had been several before I came along. But for me this was the beginning of a long and fruitful apprenticeship and an opportunity to learn and play the music from within, with musicians I had heard for years, but only on recordings. It was an enormous privilege, and it remains so.

Ernest East has been a mainstay of the music of the Roundpeak section of Surry County. He is steeped in the local style and repertory, but simultaneously he is one of the most recognizable old-time fiddlers in the country today. From the time of his boyhood in the 1920s, Ernest had learned from and played with many of the most renowned musicians of the area. And within the long list of attributes for which he is widely respected are the humility and patience he has shown in his encouragement to new-comers like myself.

Ernest East is generous with his time and his talent. Whenever the band can "help him," he can be found playing for local benefits and fund-raisers. He would sooner play for a good cause than a good fee.

Ernest is a fair-minded man. An active participant in music events throughout the area, one of his prime interests has been the proper treatment of musicians and the upholding of ethics at fiddler's conventions. He runs his band with the same standards—through democratic decision making and equal division of any income that might come in.

Ernest's loyalty accompanies his fairness. He has risked invitations to "academically-correct" festivals that would have preferred that he change his band than allow a non-native to perform with him. To Ernest, the band is the sum of its parts and its music persists through cohesion, rather than through succumbing to pressures to change.

On the home front, the hospitality that Ernest and his wife Fannie offer knows no bounds. My memories of countless nights spent at their home in Pine Ridge are filled with images of their concern for my well-being—an extra blanket, five more biscuits, another hour of fine conversation, and music. Visiting continues to be a privilege.

It is altogether fitting that Ernest East receive the Brown-Hudson Award. His musicianship, his encouragement of younger musicians, and his high-minded character merge within a specially gifted man and a vital force in the persistence of old-time music.

—Andy Cahan
The Pine Ridge Boys

Guy Benton Johnson

Guy Benton Johnson first came to North Carolina in 1924 as a graduate student in sociology. After receiving an A.B. from Baylor College and a M.A. in sociology from the University of Chicago, Guy Johnson and his wife, Guion Griffis Johnson, came to the University of North Carolina as the first graduate assistants of the newly-founded Institute for Research in Social Science. Johnson planned to study race relations, but Howard Odum, the director of the Institute, had other ideas. Odum wanted a quick publication for the IRSS, so Guy Johnson spent his first year of graduate study compiling and editing Odum's car trunkful of manuscripts of black folk song. The result was the publication of *The Negro and His Songs* in 1925. The two men collaborated on another collection of Afro-American work songs entitled *Negro Workaday Songs*, published in 1926.

While working on the second book, Guy Johnson became so interested in the legend and ballads surrounding the folk hero John Henry that he researched and published *John Henry: Tracking Down a Negro Legend* in 1929, the first full-length study of an American folk song and a model for future folk song research. Johnson, who says that he never really thought of himself as a folklorist, was part of another important research project sponsored by the IRSS, a study of the culture of St. Helena Island, one of the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina. His book *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, published in 1930, is based on his fieldwork for this project.

Just as Guy Johnson originally intended that his sojourn into folklore research would be brief, he and his wife also thought they would come to North Carolina, complete their graduate studies, and move on. Instead, the Johnsons have lived in North Carolina for the past sixty-four years and have served their university and community in a number of ways. Most recently, the Johnsons published a history of the IRSS, entitled *Research in Service to Society*, in 1980. Since his retirement in 1969 as Kenan Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of North Carolina, Guy Johnson has devoted much of his time to compiling his papers and writing music. His "Sea Island Concerto" is based on some of the folk tunes he collected on St. Helena Island.

Guy Johnson is a warm and witty man with wonderful stories to tell about life in North Carolina sixty years ago, when the road between Chapel Hill and Durham was little more than a dirt track. In some ways Guy Johnson the folklorist has also become a bearer of tradition because he can tell us so much about methods of collecting folklore in the 1920s, from buying

whiskey for potential informants, to collecting songs and tales on an unreliable Ediphone wax cylinder dictating machine, only to have many of the cylinders melt in his attic during the hot Chapel Hill summer!

By presenting him with the Brown-Hudson Folklore Award, the North Carolina Folklore Society pays tribute to Guy Johnson the man and folklore scholar.

—Lynn Moss Sanders
Appalachian State University

Leonidas Judd Betts, Jr.

Once upon a time, the *North Carolina Folklore Journal* was published by a coterie of gentleman editors at North Carolina State University who, among other accomplishments, issued numbers on time. Following in the distinguished paths of Guy Owen and Richard Walser, Leonidas Betts manned that editorship with a special touch developed through an intimate knowledge of North Carolina rural life learned as a boy and deepened by his folklore scholarship.

Leonidas Judd Betts, Jr., was born and reared in Harnett County where he still lives on Maya, a family farm established in 1825, near what was called the County Gate along the Harnett-Wake county line. In his home community he saw and heard the folkways of the North Carolina countryside, and at home he began to appreciate the forms and functions of oral narrative in preserving family ties. Lee himself has become a tradition bearer of Betts family lore.

The polish of undergraduate study at the University of North Carolina did not wear away Betts's closeness to family lore and his love of local ways. In fact, it was on weekend trips away from his studies during college days that he began collecting North Carolina vernacular pottery, another of his future folklife research interests.

In his professional career, Professor Betts has taught about, lectured on, and written of the usefulness of folklore materials in elementary and high school classrooms. He doesn't talk from an academic ivory tower—or even a Hillsborough Street campanille. Lee himself taught high school for four years in Durham City and Wake County before accepting a J.B. Duke Fellowship. This experience has informed both his articles on folklore and the classroom and a monograph, written with colleague Richard Walser, on collecting and folklore study in the schools.

The late Joe Clark once described Dr. Betts's folklore section to me as "that perennially popular course among N.C. State students." Lee, in fact, pioneered English 391: Introduction to American Folklore as State College's first course in folklife, and it has thrived for the past twelve years. A special product of it was a series of student issues of the *North Carolina Folklore Journal*. Lee's folklore students not only do fieldwork and write papers, but they even publish their findings. And Lee has used this course to design a notable Extension seminar, too.

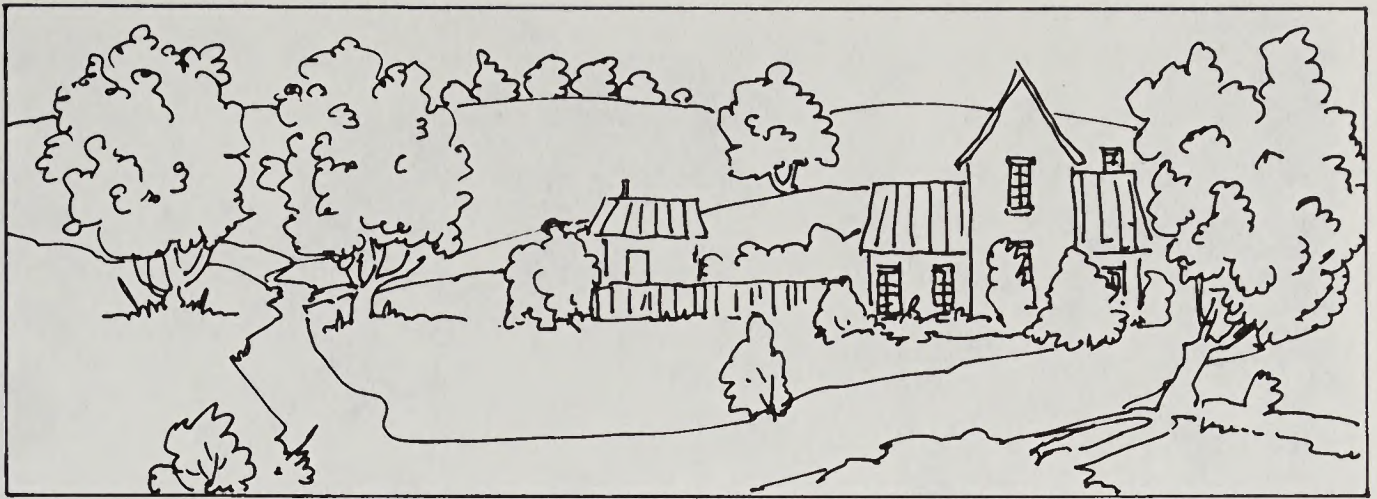
Leonidas Betts's tenure as editor of the *North Carolina Folklore Journal* from 1971 to '76 continued the special encouragement started by Walser and Owen of a school of North Carolina writers who recalled the customs and tales of their home counties and youth. Lee, however, also worked in substantial

articles and comments by nationally known folklorists including the beginning of the famed Richard Dorson-Foxfire debate. The style of Lee's own book and record notes, Society announcements, and news items and his editorial presence gave the *Journal* a friendly, homey touch, and his issues and role as Society officer continued the renaissance of our state's folklore society through Tompkins Hall leadership. As editor, he also encouraged student writers, both from his own writing and folklore classes and from other colleges. The W. Amos Abrams and Cratis D. Williams Prizes our Society sponsors today are outgrowths of occasional student contests Lee started through a N.C. Arts Council literary grant in the '70s.

Throughout these years of teaching, writing, and editing, Professor Betts continued his collecting and study of North Carolina folk pottery and of the popular adaptations of Tar Heel potters. In 1980 he began a special set of fieldwork and collecting projects to, in his words, "see if people [he] had known as a kid were still alive." His collection now includes over 4000 pieces, 182 of which the University Center Gallery here wisely featured in an exhibit entitled "Vernacular Pottery of North Carolina 1982 through 1986." The exhibit and Professor Betts's collection are notable for their geographic and stylistic breadth. Curator Charlotte Vestal Brown described the exhibit and Lee's catalog for it as "a remarkable ensemble [showing] the vast, changing, and evolving" nature of our state's pottery heritage. Lee's catalog offers a comprehensive listing of potteries and potters together with excellent articles on individuals gleaned from his fieldwork and highlighted by his perceptive appreciation of a notable state cultural resource.

For Lee's writing on and collecting of North Carolina pottery, for editor Betts's leadership of the *North Carolina Folklore Journal*, for Professor Betts's work to introduce folklife study to school classrooms, and for Leonidas Judd Betts, Jr.'s role as tradition bearer in a Harnett County family, the North Carolina Folklore Society today proudly presents him the Brown-Hudson Folklore Award.

—Thomas McGowan
Appalachian State University



“On Being”: Tom Davenport’s North Carolina Films

by Keith Cunningham

Over the past two decades Tom Davenport has established himself as one of the two or three most important and successful folklore filmmakers active in America. In the same period of time many folklore filmmakers have burst into view and then disappeared out of sight (and frame) real quick. Davenport, however, has endured. More than endured, he has prevailed and established his own style, for Davenport films have a style. Davenport has finely honed his ability to shoot a mass of footage and from that mass sculpt a masterpiece showing us something of what it means to somebody to be. His finest films are all essentially autobiographies of people and cultures whose stories they tell. This uniquely autobiographical approach is particularly apparent in his North Carolina films, which have been enriched by his association with students and faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Curriculum in Folklore. The influence of folklorists Dan Patterson and Allan Tullos has been especially productive in these three Tar Heel films.

Davenport’s first North Carolina film, *Born for Hard Luck: Peg Leg Sam Jackson*, as the subtitle suggests, tells the life story of “Peg Leg Sam” Jackson and allows a traditional performer to perform in a traditional manner, thus describing both the performance and its context. The art of Davenport is that he gives the appearance of having allowed “Peg Leg Sam” to capture the film and use it as another of his lifelong performances. The grief and pain “Peg Leg Sam” has known are clearly reflected in his disfiguring scars and injuries, but his determination to respond positively to life and to manipulate past, present, and future by performances shines forth even more clearly. “Peg Leg Sam’s” traditional philosophy of life, collected much earlier



"Peg Leg Sam" Jackson. Photography by Tom Davenport Films.

from Southern Blacks in exactly the same words by John Lomax and reported in his autobiography *Adventures of a Ballad Hunter*, is "funny things happen in this world." "Peg Leg Sam" says and believes that funny things happen in this world, and his considerable traditional musical, dance, and narrative skills have evolved and are invoked to affirm this proposition—and we see it all as audience to his performance. At one point in the film, for example, "Peg Leg Sam" takes a big swig out of a styrofoam thermal jug, twists his already twisted face further, bugs his eyes, and tells the camera, and thus the audience, "Know what I got here? Corn liquor! I fools people by telling them it's water." Actually, however, he has water in the jug, so when he tells us that he fools people by telling them he has water in the jug when actually he has corn liquor in the jug, he is fooling us by telling us that he has corn liquor in the jug when he has water in the jug, actually.

Davenport's next North Carolina film, *On Being a Joines*, is subtitled *A Life in the Brushy Mountains*. The crawl titles introduce the film, the central character, and the Davenport style:



John "Frail" Joines, Wilkes County, N.C. Photograph by Tom Davenport Films.

John Joines, a gifted tale teller, grew up in the Brushy Mountain of western North Carolina. Here the early American backwoods life lingered until nearly the Second World War. "Frail" Joines's experience and stories give a glimpse of the traditional Appalachian community and of the changes that in a single generation have swept it away.

The film does what the crawl titles say it is going to do and more. Again we see life from the point of view of the person living it. The action begins with a telling of some thoroughly traditional "scar stories" and continues with autobiographical musing by "Frail" Joines, the central character, brought to life by skillful use of historic photographs. One particularly vivid "scar story" describes a wound with the words, "And it stunk like a dead horse."

The next major sequence of the film concentrates upon the performance, in reasonably realistic contexts, of "lies" and "true tales." The film moves gradually from these stories into the telling of "war stories," comic and tragic.

After the presentation of more autobiographical information, Joines (joined by his wife) begins recounting a series of religious narratives including stories of out-of-body experiences and divine healing. One particularly vivid healing story involves the vomiting up of noxious matter which is characterized again by the phrase, "And it stunk like a dead horse."

The film closes with a series of personal narratives about the Joines's courtship and marriage. When Mrs. Joines denies that one story happened, "Frail" responds, "Well, I didn't say you did. I said I told it on you." The closing episode, and the "scar story" and healing narrative which use the exact same phrase, "And it stunk like a dead horse," show that "Frail's" narratives are one art regardless of their subject or genre and that, while he, perhaps, is not as continually "on stage" as "Peg Leg Sam," folklore in the sense of traditional performance is as important a part of his life as it is a part of "Peg Leg Sam's" life.

Davenport's third North Carolina film, *A Singing Stream*, is subtitled *A Black Family's Chronicle*, and again the subtitle is extremely significant. The film is a family's autobiography and, like the other Davenport films, is structured so that they tell (and sing) their lives. It is, in effect, a multiple life history.

The multiple life history is successful because life is like that: history is multiple. Each member of the group has memories of what really happened based upon what he needs to remember and what he needs to forget; and his memories, plus the memories of another member based on what she needs to remember and what she needs to forget; and their memories, plus the memories of all other members of the group based on what they need to remember, equal *A Singing Stream*. *A Singing Stream* is a Black family's chronicle; the matricentric foci of the film look to a past including parents as well as grandparents and to a future including great-grandchildren as well as grandchildren. In *A Singing Stream* a mother and her children report incidents and periods in interactional, overlapping narration with one person frequently gently disagreeing with another as to the events reported and, more importantly, as to the meaning of the events reported. The result of this interactional narration is that *A Singing Stream* reveals a family, their lives, and their life through time and space and reveals that traditional performances, although very different from those of "Frail" Joines or "Peg Leg Sam," are an essential part of their being.

Ruth Bunzel once wrote that the purpose of her long involved research at Zuni was to learn what it meant to be Zuni. Tom Davenport's North Carolina films could all three be titled "On Being," for they help the viewer to learn what it means to be. All use a basically autobiographical point of view and structure to reveal individuals, culture, and the complex relationships between them.

All three center in traditional cosmologies and eschatologies. "Peg Leg Sam" eloquently explains his humanistic theology, most closely akin to Unitarian Universalism; the Joines's extensive religious experiences clearly occur within the framework of a tradition; and the Landis family are so thoroughly entrenched in the middle of the sect-church continuum that they appear visibly uncomfortable when a member of their audience enters the



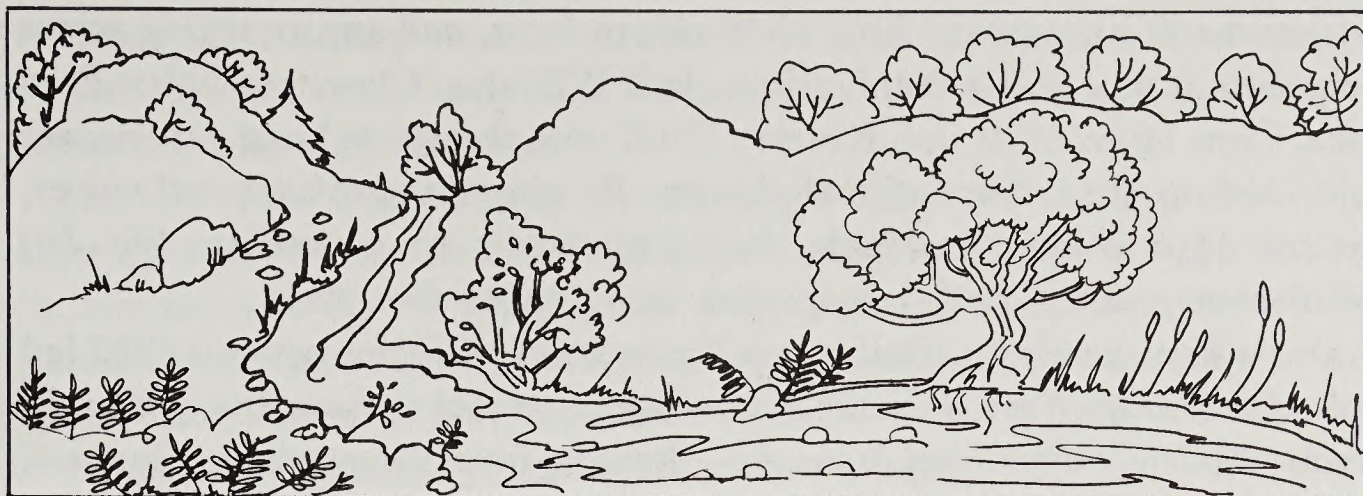
Mrs. Bertha Landis and members of her family, Creedmoor, N.C. Photography by Tom Davenport Films.

trance state Peter Cartwright observed and described in his autobiography—“the jerks.” The family is obviously very happy, but they are not ecstatic.

Against the backdrop of three religious traditions, all three follow a similar narrative progression and begin with “scar stories” detailing obstacles, difficulties, and prejudices the individuals have overcome. The sense of accomplishment in each is heightened by the telling of obstacles so that, for example, a man’s full closet and articulated philosophy of clothing as costume find their full meaning in the telling of stories of lacking adequate clothing as children. All three show narrative used to create and control what was, is, and shall be. All three show the power of man and the power of tradition.

At a paradigmatic structural level, all three move from telling of difficulties encountered to a Henley-like assertion of selfhood and ego. From “Peg Leg

Sam's'' boundless and unending joy in performing, to "Frail's" conviction that God has spoken through him and has miraculously healed his wife, to the Landis's feeling that God led them from slavery to a life of promise, all three films demonstrate that man shall not only endure but shall prevail through and by the use of tradition. And so shall, I hope and trust, the filmmaker prevail who allows people to tell themselves to us so that we learn of being.



Joy in the Coming Home

by W.H. Ward

“The first time I ever played music for money,” Doc Watson replies to the question, “was on the street ... with a cup on my guitar; and I ain’t nary bit ashamed of it. Now, I used to be a little bit. But I’ve thought back about that since then. I was a-selling something, just like I do now when a person buys a ticket to come in and hear me pick.” Joe Murphy is the asker of the question, its context *Doc and Merle*, Murphy’s and Kevin Balling’s 1986 documentary on the Watsons and their music. Doc’s answer, even as it asserts a fundamental harmony between the two contrasting chapters of his personal history, nevertheless acknowledges that his life has been very much a before-and-after affair, an Old and New Testament to his gifts and his character.

The image of him we carry in our heads is naturally that of the After-Doc: the winner of multiple Grammys, the recipient of the Brown-Hudson and North Carolina Awards, the patron saint of acoustic flatpicking. *Doc and Merle* celebrates his latter-day avatar in simple and businesslike ways. We hear the casually confident judgment of fans at a fiddlers’ convention that Doc represents “the best there is,” and we see generous footage of concerts (including one on the White House lawn with Jimmy Carter beaming approval from stage right). Yet it was the earlier phases of Doc’s evolution that seemed most urgently to need documenting when Murphy and Balling started their project; and how they fill that need constitutes one of their more impressive achievements.

His habitual patience and courtesy have put Doc at the mercy of countless interviewers and drop-in pilgrims to the series of houses in Deep Gap he and his family have occupied over the last thirty years. The questions about his musical beginnings are always the same, and his responses have assumed an almost catechistic fixity. His reminiscences of the fifties and sixties,

the decades of his passage from obscurity to fame, call an unvarying roster of significant names. Gaither Carlton. Jack Williams. Clarence Ashley. Fred Price. Clint Howard. Ralph Rinzler. Until now, they have been only names from Doc's past to many of his followers. By giving them faces and voices, *Doc and Merle* brings a notable man's memories to immediate life. No documentary can hope to accomplish much more than that.

Doc's first meeting with the east Tennessean Williams around 1952 led to the formation of an electrified band which seems to have specialized in country boogie, current pop hits, and—judging from the surviving photos—gag costumes. It was a period that those wedded to the misconception of Doc as rustic troubadour would as soon forget about, but it was also one which honed his lead guitar on a wide range of material and bred the self-assured stage presence he still carries. Williams's wonder at his old friend remains undiminished. "I saw he had talent," he tells Murphy. "I figured he could go places if he ever got to where somebody could hear him that had the influence and the place to take him to." As it turned out, Doc's opportunity stemmed from a musical association which predated even his relationship with Williams.

On Labor Day weekend 1960, musicologist and founding Greenbriar Boy Rinzler came south to the Blue Ridge on a cultural hunting expedition. The object of his search was Ashley, a former medicine-show banjo player and recording artist from the twenties and thirties then living quietly (or as quietly as an incurable ham can live) in Shouns, Tennessee, on the North Carolina line. Though now long dead, the garrulous, gallus-snapping Ashley romps through *Doc and Merle's* anecdotes and archival stills like an irrepressible ghost bent on upstaging the living. Few who knew him seem able to talk about him without falling into an imitation of his voice or movements: the film contains at least four spontaneous Ashley impressions, one of them by Doc.

When Rinzler found his quarry, good things began to happen. The most tangible was a two-volume Folkways album, *Old Time Music at Clarence Ashley's*. But the one of greatest consequence for the future was Rinzler's introduction to a long-time playing partner of Ashley's at land auctions and other functions where local string bands could still pick up a few dollars: a blind instrumental wizard named Arthel Watson but called "Doc" by his friends. The particulars of their first encounter conform so perfectly to stereotypical notions about the "discovery" of traditional musicians as to seem like something from the folklore of folklore. It took place in the bed of a pickup truck on the road between Doc's house and Ashley's, and the instrument Doc played was not guitar but banjo. The story is a classic set piece in Doc's oral memoirs, delivered even today with a trace of bewilderment at Rinzler's excited conviction of Doc's potential appeal to big-city audiences with a new-found taste for ethnic performers. The account of that momentous pickup ride in *Doc and Merle* will stand as definitive because Murphy and Balling sat the two passengers down together and recorded both versions. Rinzler's,

free from the modesty that constrains Doc, is more concise: Doc simply jumped onto the truck bed, said, "Lemme see that banjo, son," and proceeded to "play hell out of it."

The trip from Deep Gap to Shouns begot another one of considerably longer distance. In March 1961 Rinzler brought five of his new Appalachian acquaintances to New York City for a concert under the auspices of the Friends of Old Time Music. With Ashley as headliner, the troupe also included Price, Howard, Doc, and his late father-in-law Carlton. What the surviving members of the group chiefly remember about the occasion is their own initial perplexity at the crowd's response. "We got up on the stage and played," Howard recalls, "and they began to holler and cheer us, and I thought they was sorry for us. I said, 'They don't like this old music, they just feel sorry for us because we're from down there in them old mountains.' But they really loved it. They really loved it." A major preservationist coup for *Doc and Merle* is its staging of reunion picking sessions between Doc and his colleagues from the old days, in the process bringing us as nearly in touch with his professional past as we can ever come. Indeed, its sequences of him jamming with Jack Williams may be the only such in existence. But the availability of a black-and-white film of Doc, Price, and Howard performing their a cappella stunner "Daniel Prayed" at a 1967 Seattle festival moved Murphy and Balling to depart briefly from their normally unobtrusive editing style and intercut the old footage with verses sung by the same trio almost twenty years later. The very raggedness of the contemporary rendition throws into sharper relief the tightness of the other's harmony. It is harmony more than adequate to explain the thunderous reaction of the New Yorkers on hearing it for the first time.

If *Doc and Merle* accurately identifies Rinzler as the quasi-messianic figure whose coming would enable Doc, in Williams's words, to "go places," it employs John Cohen as a sort of amiable exegete charged with periodically putting matters into intellectual perspective for us. A member of the New Lost City Ramblers and a moving force among the sponsors of the 1961 concert, Cohen has some quite perceptive things to say about Doc's guitar work (which he terms "athletic" and "acrobatic") and public appeal (ascribing it to an illusionary "front-porch" air in his presentation that makes his technical brilliance seem still more astounding). Moreover, despite Doc's resistance to attempts at romanticizing him, there is something familiar in Cohen's mythic vision of the formative Doc as "a blind man in a dark room with some old 78s and his guitar." But old time music can breed a purism exactly as naive as it is supercilious. Cohen uncorks some tangy historical ironies when he comments that the Friends of Old Time Music and the concerts they underwrote were meant to stand as "a criticism of what the Kingston Trio and the Limelickers and the more commercial groups were doing with the music." In the first place, however indirectly, the groups Cohen disparages probably led as many converts to "real" folk music as the New

Lost City Ramblers did. More to the point, Doc himself, for whom Cohen's respect is profound and sincere, has never been squeamish about reworking traditional material when it suited him to do so. Doc's determination to support his family through his music (the consuming drive of his adult life, as *Doc and Merle* vividly demonstrates) has made fastidiousness like Cohen's an unaffordable luxury to him. Financial considerations, not artistic ones, prompted his switch from the folk-oriented Vanguard label to a United Artists subsidiary in the early seventies, and over the years they have led him down some curious repertorial byroads as well (witness the hyperactive rock and roll medley near the film's end by which Murphy and Balling presumably mean to bring him full circle back to his scuffling days with Jack Williams's band).

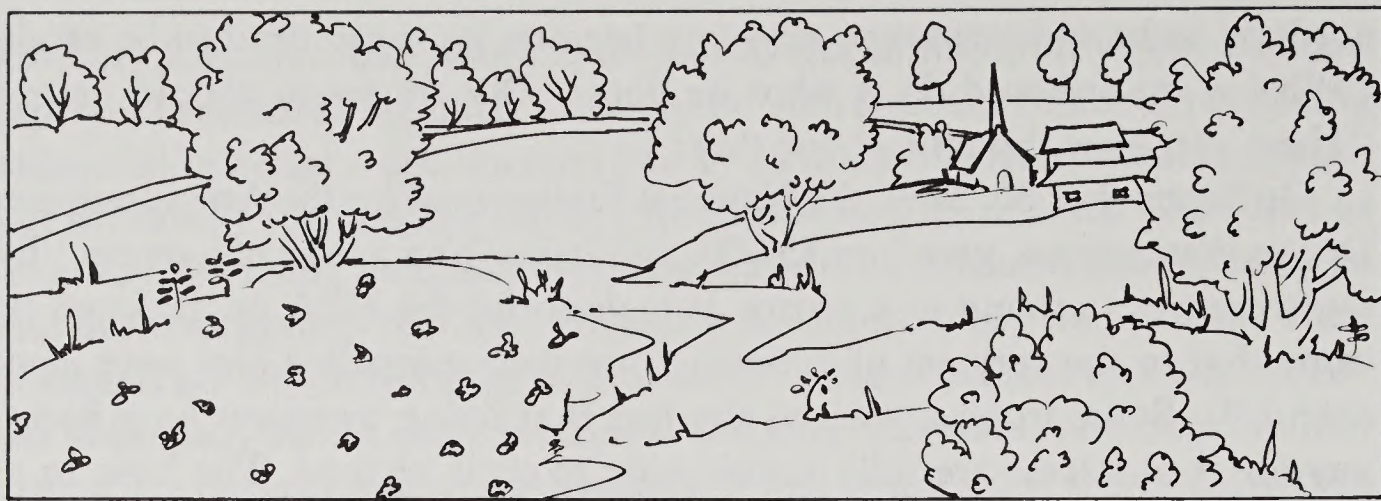
Though the producers evidently decided from the outset that Doc's story was Merle's story too, they had no way of anticipating the final value of their on-camera conversations with the son and the sideman whom Doc had named for Eddy Arnold and Merle Travis. The impassive speechlessness Merle always maintained during performances belied his private reputation as a hard dog to keep under the porch. But when his tractor went into a ditch and killed him in the predawn hours of October 23, 1985, millions who had heard his slide guitar had never heard his voice. Merle's own reflections on his experience thus seem a more satisfying memorial to him than the retrospective montage which Murphy and Balling run against his lugubrious instrumental "Thoughts of Never" by way of formal elegy. He talks engagingly about learning his first few chords from his mother Rosa Lee (then finding himself only weeks later playing backup for Doc before a California crowd of twelve thousand) and he frankly asserts that family relationships become business ones once the Winnebago clears the driveway. Indeed, their shared loathing of The Road, the broken-striped parasite that lives off the vital spirits of musicians, was a bitter point of agreement between him and Doc. Merle, however, with his adeptness at record production, his experience as a contractor—in a word, with his sight—could choose other options. His feelings crystallize in a scene where he has stayed home to clear trees from a building lot with his son Richard while Doc has gone to New York for a date at Carnegie Hall. Waltzing the chainsaw is easier work, Merle pants; and as for the glamour of Carnegie Hall, "I've played there before." Characteristically, the equivalent sequence with Doc bares more of the heart. Apparently on the grounds of the White House, he confesses to Rinzler in a bone-weary voice that had he known beforehand what celebrity would demand of him, the ride from Deep Gap to Shouns would have ended differently: "I'd reach over and say, 'Good buddy, I can't do it.... You come back anytime you want to and we'll pick the hell out of it; but I ain't going on the road.' " His anodyne is a kind of fatalism, and even his courage does

not have to be quite courage anymore because he is too tired to be afraid. "What a man should do is what he does," Doc muses to his old patron. "Have you ever thought about that?"

On September 30, 1988, the National Endowment for the Arts summoned Doc to Washington, gave him \$5,000, and hailed him as one of a dozen "living treasures" among folk artists. It is doubtful the NEA appreciated the irony that in the very act of honoring him they compelled him once again onto I-81. Some ironies, such as the fact that living treasures have had to pay for themselves, are fully visible only to their victims. The lyric to an otherwise improbable Dan Fogelberg song that the Watsons chose to put on their *Red Rocking Chair* album runs this way:

Joy at the start, fear in the journey,
Joy in the coming home;
A part of the heart gets lost in the learning
Somewhere along the road.

Doc and Merle illuminates the meaning of the words and the reason for the choice. Having accompanied Murphy and Balling on what amounts to the ultimate visit to Doc's house, we know much more about what it has gained and cost him to come to us.



Book Review

Diversities of Gifts: Field Studies in Southern Religion. Edited by Ruel W. Tyson, Jr., James L. Peacock, and Daniel W. Patterson. Urbana: U. of Illinois P., 1988. Pp. xiv-218. Hardback, \$21.95.

Reviewed by Howard Dorgan

Southern religious traditions constitute a rich and colorful mosaic, one that mingles within its motley and irregular patterns a host of small, independent, Protestant sects that provide cultural variety as they enliven the region's spiritual milieu. *Diversities of Gifts: Field Studies in Southern Religion* is a collection of eleven original essays (plus a preface, introduction, and conclusion) that capture part of this Southern mosaic, specifically as it has been mortared across the coastal plains, piedmont, and mountains of North Carolina. The work's main title has been lifted from 1st Corinthians 12:4 (King James version): "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit."

There is some sameness in spirit (and character) among the various religious groups treated in these essays: They are largely independent, "down home," and provincial in tone and tradition, removed from the mainstream mode, impassioned in commitment to faith and practice, and congregational in polity. Nevertheless, there is a wide range of theological bases represented—Wesleyan, Baptist, Quaker, Pentecostal/Holiness, and nondenominational millenarian; as well as a mixture of ethnographic orientations—Asian, Native American, black, and white; while the contributing scholars come from the fields of anthropology, religious studies, and folklore. So *Diversities of Gifts* is itself a mosaic, but one that blends its variant parts into a corporate whole.

All of the studies have been grounded upon extensive field investigations, and they are largely phenomenological in approach, in the sense that they are heavily descriptive rather than theoretical. In addition, there is a strongly

empathic tone in a number of the essays, providing an aura of sensitivity that seems both appropriate to the material and advantageous to the apparent objectives of the volume. All of the contributions are skillfully written, and there is an evenness in the work that could only have come from careful editing.

This review will not summarize each of the eleven essays. That might require more space than is available. Instead, special attention will be given to only four of the writings, with the particular selections being made primarily on the basis of the reviewer's personal interest in the respective materials.

Isabel B. Terry, an anthropologist, contributes "A Quaker Meeting and Mainstream Religion in a North Carolina Community," an essay which examines a Friends fellowship whose beliefs and worship practices have evolved under the cultural influences of what appears to be a typical Methodist/Baptist community in a rural section of the North Carolina piedmont. Terry captures a congregation of Quakers who, over several generations, have made certain adjustments to an environment of evangelical Protestantism and to the numerous intermarriages that brought former Methodists, Baptists, and other non-Quaker Protestants into the fellowship. This is a study of the results of a cultural synthesis, showing how one religious community has accommodated itself to the influences of a more dominant (in number of churches) religious tradition. In a sense, it is a study of ecumenicity, as this fellowship of Friends seek out their own best path to travel through this maze of spiritual "diversities."

Beverly B. Patterson, also an anthropologist, provides the essay "Finding a Home in the Church: Primitive Baptist Women," a treatise which examines the role of women in small Primitive Baptist fellowships in Northwest North Carolina, in the process detailing gender codes that remain embedded in worship practices, church governance, and spousal relations within this highly traditional sect. One of the most interesting features of this study is Patterson's examination of feminine imagery employed in Primitive Baptist hymns, sermons, and frequently used Scripture texts, an imagery that often communicates a far more positive view of womanhood than that view suggested by the highly restrictive gender codes of this Baptist group. The contrast that is thus exposed suggests a paradoxical duality in the Primitive Baptist mind.

"'Going Up to Meet Him': Songs and Ceremonies of a Black Family's Ascent" is the contribution to this volume (in addition to his editing) from Daniel W. Patterson, folklorist. This essay provides an interesting examination of the Golden Echoes, a black gospel singing group that has emerged largely from the ranks of one talented family. The essay becomes not only an examination of the activities of this amateur performing group but a portrait of the Landis family from which the Golden Echoes singers and instrumentalists initially emerged. Patterson's subtitle for this work, "Songs

and Ceremonies of a Black Family's Ascent," is highly significant to his depiction of this familial unit and to the story of the group's matriarch, Mrs. Bertha Mangum Landis. The folklorist's summation remarks concerning the Golden Echoes are sensitive, perceptive, and profound, demonstrating his deep appreciation for the aspirations and accomplishments of this family.

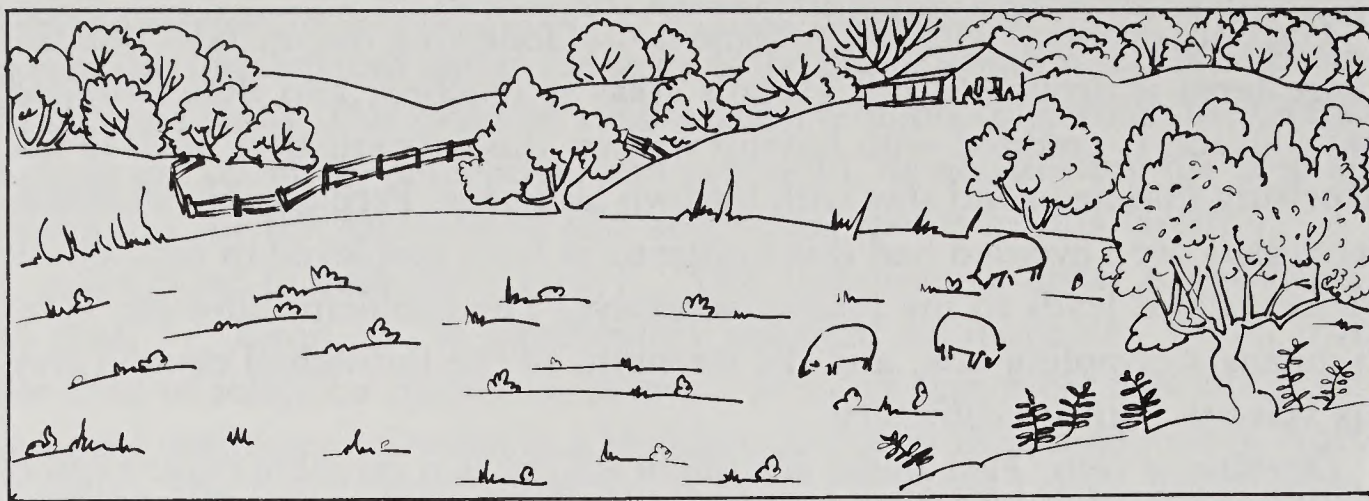
Compared to these three essays, "The Testimony of Sister Annie Mae," by Ruel W. Tyson, Jr., is significantly different in approach. Tyson, from the field of religious studies, provides a probing rhetorical analysis of one personal testimony delivered in a Holiness church in Robeson County, North Carolina. On July 6, 1976, Sister Annie Mae, a Lumbee Indian, stood among her fellow members of the Pine Grove Holiness Church (apparently not the institution's real name) and pronounced a testimony that runs over 1,600 words in the printed text. After providing this text, and some background to its deliverance, Tyson examines both the form and substance of the speaker's rhetoric, moving the reader to a deeper understanding of the various nuances within the message. Pronouncing Sister Annie Mae a "virtuosa" of this genre of religious expression, Tyson provides an analysis of this testimony that could easily become a base from which comparisons with similar rhetorical forms could be drawn.

It would be unjust not to at least name the other seven essays, all of which would be worthy of similar discussions: James Wise, "The Sons of God"; John Forrest, "The Devil Sits in the Choir"; Douglas Reinhardt, "With His Stripes We Are Healed: White Pentecostals and Faith Healing"; Catherine L. Peck, "Your Daughters Shall Prophecy: Women in the Afro-American Preaching Tradition"; Brett Sutton, "Speech, Chant, and Song: Patterns of Language and Action in a Southern Church"; Yutaka Yamada, "Like My Husband's Shadow: The Religious Experience of a Japanese War-bride in North Carolina"; and James L. Peacock, "A Pentecostal Account of Spiritual Quest." Perhaps these provocative titles will motivate readers of this review to make their own examinations of this interesting volume of essays.

There is one notable weakness in this work: A thematic focus suggested by the volume's introduction is not maintained, at least not in any overtly constituted way. This problem is created by the introduction's emphasis upon "gesture," a term which is employed to signify not only the distinctive physical movements of any religious group but the entire style, way of thinking and being, and discrete nature and spirit of the respective group. Indeed, this introduction declares "gesture" to be the "bridge term" that will tie together the eleven essays, a declaration that seems to suggest to the reader that he or she should expect to see this term serving as a kind of anchoring between one essay and another.

The only problem with this scheme is that following the introduction the bridge term is dropped until Tyson's essay is reached, and then dropped again. Tyson is credited with having written this introduction, so it is not surprising that he would stay with his own language. Perhaps this weakness could have been avoided had this bridge term been employed in each of the brief italicized leads to the respective essays. The problem, however, is by no means a crippling one, and the strengths of the individual essays carry this volume with no difficulty.

Diversities of Gifts: Field Studies in Southern Religion is a valuable contribution to the field of ethnography and will be of interest to scholars in religion, anthropology, folklore, and Southern regionalism.



1988 W. Amos Abrams Prize

Why Jesse Fought for Both Sides: Family Anecdotes from the Civil War

by Karen D. Hatton

At an early age, I was fascinated by history, particularly my family history. I've never really understood why. Maybe it's because when I was at the tender age of five, my parents and maternal grandparents took me and my brother way up in the Brushy Mountains to visit an elderly relative. This relative, a Mr. Broyhill, was said to be a great storyteller and authority on my family history. I remember very little about the visit except that he took me to see some strange birds (pheasants) and gave me an egg, which he said would make a good toy to play with after it had been boiled. (I didn't get to try that out because my brother broke the egg before we got home.) I now regret that I wasn't older when I met him. He would've been a great source for my genealogical research. However, he had been dead a few years when I started doing genealogical research a month before my thirteenth birthday. I've heard from several people that he had written down all the information he knew about the Broyhill and Joines families, but that the information had disappeared not long after he died.

Or maybe my fascination with family history began when Papaw Houck told me stories about his childhood. For example, the Christmas his cousin got horse manure in his stocking after he was caught peeping at his parents, aunts, and uncles while they were putting the children's presents out. Anyway, I started gathering family anecdotes in 1979, at age 12, when our school's artist-in-residence was a man who was having us, the school children, talk to our grandparents and elderly neighbors about the past as a class project. (He was supposed to use our work in a Foxfire book, but I've never seen

any indication that he did.) And I've continued gathering family anecdotes since I began doing genealogical research in January, 1980. After covering several different periods of history in my research, I think my favorite period to work with is the Civil War period, and I've collected several family anecdotes from this period.

My favorite two family anecdotes from the Civil War period were told to me by my great-aunt Vena Joines Stagner when I was gathering stories for the class project. Aunt Vena is considered to be quite an extraordinary character, and at the age of 84, is the oldest living member of the family. Because of her age and her memory, which is quite good, Aunt Vena is a good source for family anecdotes.

However, very few people get to hear Aunt Vena's anecdotes, especially the older ones. She only tells them if she thinks people are interested. Most of her friends and relatives her age have died, and most people of the younger generations aren't interested. These people are so caught up in their own busy lives that they don't want to spend time with elderly people listening to stories about events and people from the past. With Aunt Vena, listeners have to show a genuine interest and ask a few questions to get her started. Once Aunt Vena gets started, she tells all kinds of interesting stories and continues for hours. She is happy that I'm interested in the family history and is one of my best sources. Sometimes she doesn't know the specific facts, but through her stories I find hints of places to look for information.

One of the anecdotes she told me concerns Jesse Frank Joines, her paternal grandfather and my great-great-grandfather. This is the story she told me:

Why Jesse Fought for Both the North and the South

My grandfather, Jesse Frank Joines, fought in the Confederate Army at the beginning of the Civil War. The outfit he was in was going to be moved and he asked to go home on leave. (Some say he had heard that his wife was fooling around with another man. Women sometimes get lonesome and desperate during wartime.) The company commander, who was said to be real tough on the troops, said no.

So Jesse went home anyway, and when he returned to camp, he was imprisoned. He was court martialed and found guilty of desertion, so he was sentenced to be shot the next morning at sunrise.

He was jailed in a one-room log building. The building didn't have any windows and it had only one door. With a guard at the only door, he couldn't find any way to escape.

About midnight, he came up with the idea of having to pee so that the guard would have to let him out. About an hour later, he asked the guard to let him go again. At the third time just before dawn, Jesse saw the guard leaning on his rifle and that his head was nodding as if he were about to go to sleep. Jesse grabbed the rifle and knocked the guard in the head.

Jesse ran off into the woods and made his way into the Union lines where he joined the Union Army.

The anecdote gives a dramatic and romanticized view of the Civil War, with a hero who is faced with a challenge and the threat of death but narrowly escapes by using his wits. However, when I compared the above story

with the facts that can be found in official documents remaining from the Civil War period, I came up with a different story.

Jesse Frank Joines did start out fighting on the Confederate side. According to Confederate enlistment records, Jesse Frank Joines was enlisted in Wilkes County on 22 August 1862 by Captain McKay. Jesse was made a private in Company D, 18th Regiment, N.C. Infantry (formerly known as the 8th Regiment N.C. Infantry Volunteers). His period of service was to be the duration of the war.

However, one of the differences between the anecdote and the true story can be seen in the muster rolls. Jesse is always present or accounted for from the time of his enlistment until May 1864. According to the company muster rolls, Jesse was present 22 August to 3 October 1862 and November to December 1862. The muster rolls for January to April 1863 and July to August 1863 also show that he was absent due to sickness. The muster rolls for May to June 1863 and September to December 1863 are missing. However, among the Confederate documents on Private Jesse Frank Joines, there is a receipt roll where he appears to have been issued clothing at General Hospital No. 1 for Lynchburg, Virginia, on 10 April 1863. He is accounted for as present on the company muster rolls for January 1864 to February 1864 and March 1864 to April 1864.

On the May 1864 roll and the June 1864 roll, he is counted absent, and there is a notation that it is believed he was captured on 12 May 1864. On the rolls for July 1864 to February 1865, he is listed as absent because he was captured. After February 1865, Jesse's name appears on the Roll of Honor. His name also appears on the Roll of Prisoners of War at Point Lookout, Maryland, which states that he was captured in battle at Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia, on 12 May 1864 and that his date of arrival was 18 May 1864 at Belle Plains, Virginia. The POW roll states that Jesse was released from Point Lookout after joining the U.S. service on 15 June 1864. He joined Company K, 1st Regiment, U.S. Volunteers Infantry as a private (Joines, Nancy).

The muster rolls, the receipt roll, and the Prisoners of War Roll from the Yankee prison, Point Lookout, show that there is no possible way that Jesse could have been AWOL. All of his absences are accounted for as sickness or capture. The receipt roll proves that he was in need of medical care, and the POW roll accounts for the time he was captured until he was released after swearing allegiance to the Union and joining U.S. service.

Another interesting aspect of the anecdote is the possibility of the unfaithful wife. The anecdote suggests that the woman is Nancy Elvira Duncan Joines, my great-great-grandmother. But that is impossible because, according to other family genealogists, Jesse and Nancy were married 1 May 1876 in Wilkes County. (I can't find a marriage bond for the couple in the N.C. Archives or the Wilkes County Courthouse.) However, Jesse was married to someone else before Nancy. Several relatives say he was married to

a Sarah Clanton, but I can't find a record of this marriage either. But I have found a marriage bond for a Jesse Frank Joines and a Sarah Tompson on 16 January 1859 in Wilkes County. No one knows anything about Jesse's first wife, Sarah. There is no record of any children, nor is there any record of her death or of a divorce. But if Jesse's wife was cheating on him while he was fighting, Sarah would have been the one in the story.

The other anecdote Aunt Vena tells is about her maternal great-uncle, William Edward Clanton; it was probably told to her by William's sister, Martha. According to Aunt Vena and her sister, Lou Joines Church, they used to go visit and check on their great-aunt Martha almost every day after they finished working in their father's fields. Martha would feed them supper, teach them how to crochet, and tell them stories.

This is the story that Aunt Vena told me:

Hideout at Hodger's House

My great-uncle, William Clanton, didn't want to fight in the Civil War. So he hid in a cave-like opening in the mountains, called Hodger's House, for several months.

His sister, Franky, would dress up like a man and tie a bag of food around her middle under her shirt. When she went to take the food to William, she would never take the same way or path. She would take a rifle or axe to make it look like she was hunting or chopping wood. She would walk all over Moore's Mountain before going to Hodger's House.

One day some men got suspicious and suspected that Franky was a woman. They tried following her, but they always lost her. They knew what direction she went so they scattered men with rifles all over the mountain. They watched her leave the house and watched her go to Hodger's House.

After they saw her leave, they went to the opening of the cave. They stuck the ends of their rifles in the opening and told William he had the choice of staying in there and dying or coming out and fighting in the Civil War.

William came out and he went to fight in the war. William never came back home because he was killed in battle.

Most of the facts of this anecdote check out, but there are still some parts of the story that I find questionable. According to the limited Confederate service documents, William E. Clanton of Wilkes County was enlisted at Camp Mangum on 21 September 1862 by Major Malet. He was assigned to Company B, 26th Regiment, N.C. Infantry as a private. The next existing record concerning his whereabouts is the register of the Confederate State Army General Hospital in Charlottesville, Virginia. According to the register, he was admitted on 25 December 1863 with chronic bronchitis and was released to duty on 29 January 1864. The company muster roll for January 1864 to February 1864 accounts for him as being present. Receipt rolls show William as having been issued clothing in both February and March 1864. William E. Clanton is listed as having been killed at or near Cold Harbor, Virginia, on 2 June 1864.

All of the facts show that William E. Clanton did fight in the Civil War and he was killed in battle. However, I wonder why he enlisted at Camp Mangum, which is in Raleigh. Could it be that is where the men took him

to be forced into service? All of these questions are ones that will have to remain a mystery unless relevant documents on the matter should suddenly be found. One fact that has been confirmed is that William did have an older sister named Franky (1850 Wilkes County census).

Both Aunt Vena and her younger brother, Charlie Joines, believe that William Clanton really did hide out in Hodger's House. Both of them were born and raised in the mountains of Wilkes County. And both of them wandered all over the mountains in their younger days and still do today in their advanced ages. Uncle Charlie and Aunt Vena both say that when they were younger they went into Hodger's House and found an iron skillet (the type used in the mid-1800s). They left it in the cave; however, they said that a few years ago they decided to go back and get the skillet before someone found it and stole it. When they went back to the area, they weren't able to find Hodger's House because the weeds and stickers had grown up badly there.

Both "Why Jesse Fought for Both the North and the South" and "Hideout at Hodger's House" are family anecdotes which contain certain facts that are questionable or are contradicted by official documents from the Civil War period. There are a few explanations why. First, it is possible that as the stories got passed on, facts were changed. This happens often in oral history.

Another possible explanation is that the stories cover up facts which at the time proved embarrassing to the families. Because several Wilkes County men did fight for the Union, many families were divided over the war. For example, the Joines family could have become upset when Jesse pledged allegiance to the Union and joined the U.S. service after being imprisoned at Point Lookout for only one month. Jesse was looked down upon for having done this, and he was unable to get a pension for his war service since he fought for both sides. However, a year after his death in 1903, his widow became eligible for the widow's pension (Joines, Nancy, widow's pension).

Aunt Vena's stories are romanticized and dramatized versions of history. Jesse's being AWOL is more interesting than his being sick for several months. And his way of escaping imprisonment and the type of imprisonment are more exciting in the story than what the documents show. Also, the anecdote makes Jesse's joining the Union side more honorable. In the story, it looks as though he is justified in switching sides and that by doing so he can pay the Confederates back for wanting to kill him. The same explanation could apply to the Clanton story. Maybe the Clantons were embarrassed by whatever caused William not to want to fight (either cowardice or strong feelings against war itself or what the Civil War was being fought for) and his hiding out makes an exciting story.

Family anecdotes serve several purposes. They are ways of handing down personal information about family members that would be lost if the past were interpreted only by official documents. Family anecdotes contain hints

of possible places for genealogists and historians to search for further information about a person or an event. Anecdotes also make history come alive for a person; too often history seems dull and dry when read from textbooks. The family anecdote also gives a more personal view of a particular period of history. And, finally, family anecdotes are a good way to communicate and share with several generations.

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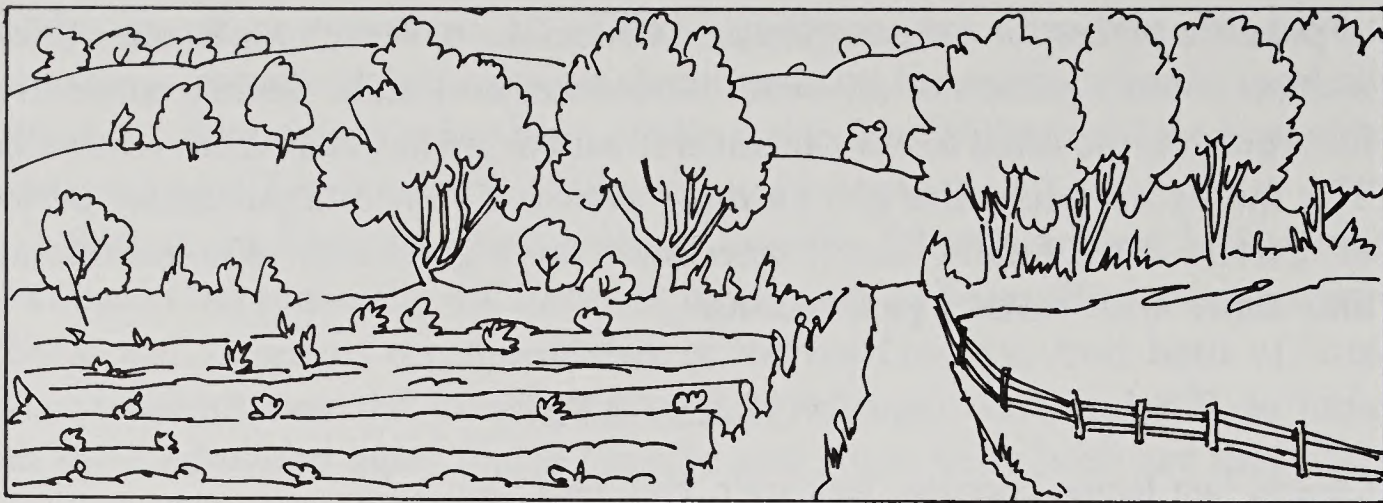
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1988 Student Contest Honorable Mention

Tying Tails: Oxen in North Carolina Folk Culture

by Jochen Welsch

On a warm, sunny October Saturday on the western edge of the North Carolina Piedmont, two men, Dave Bryant and Bud Kistler are putting their six-month-old bull calves in the yoke for the first time. "He's the near ox," Dave told me as I slipped the bow around the first calf's neck and up through the yoke, fastening it with a pin. "The other's the off ox," he continued as Bud did the same for the second and then checked to see how it rode. "It's not too big, fits them just right," he observed. "Yeah, you'll get the rest of the year out of that yoke," Dave agreed.

While this scene, or something very much like it, has been repeated time and again over the last 250 years, it seems out of place in 1987, given today's near total mechanization of agriculture. Oxen, for that matter, are not generally associated with Southern agriculture. Mules hold that distinction and round out the popular stereotype of the Southern farm, along with cotton, poverty, and tenancy. These stereotypes, popularized since the Civil War in both fiction and scholarly studies, neglect the important role oxen played in the South well into the late nineteenth century.

Census figures reveal that as late as 1890, the last year oxen were counted, there were 58,192 working oxen in North Carolina, a figure representing 20 per cent of all draft animals in the state. The three other South Atlantic states, Virginia, Georgia, and South Carolina, shared similar, albeit slightly lower, percentages. While statistical documentation of oxen in the twentieth century is unavailable, sources from oral history suggest that oxen were not uncommon in upland sections of the state as late as the early 1930s. Thus, it appears that what Bud and Dave are doing is not nearly as

anachronistic as it might seem, even though tractors and other farm machinery have replaced almost all animals and would appear to have rendered them obsolete. While this may be the case in large agricultural enterprises, Bud and Dave feel that oxen can still be of value to smaller less specialized operators. Indeed, their rationale for keeping and using oxen—they are inexpensive and prove a good investment in work and resale value—often parallels that expressed by Southern “progressive” agriculturalists of the nineteenth century vis-a-vis horses and mules.

Although oxen had initially been the primary source of draft, they gradually lost favor and were replaced by horses. In the 1850 Census horses represented 70 per cent of all draft animals in North Carolina and oxen only 18 per cent. Asses and mules, at 12 per cent, made up the smallest portion of the draft population. After this date the horse’s dominant position began to erode and the mule began its ascendance, which culminated in 1935 when the state’s 295,000 mules represented 82 per cent of her draft animals (Lamb 50). It must be noted, however, that the mule’s rise came at the horse’s expense. The percentage of oxen as draft animals remained surprisingly constant in the forty-year period for which we have records, a fitting testament to their durability, steadiness, and versatility.

As mules became more readily available, reform-minded farmers like M.C.M. Hammond of Beech Island, South Carolina, suggested that the horse “be restricted to the rich, for uses of the saddle and the carriage, and his place in all farming operations be filled by the ox and the mule” (37). Because the horse was fragile, Hammond, and many others, believed it should be used only for that which it was best suited: transportation. The mule was said through breeding to be better adapted to work. A hybrid, the mule combined the best attributes of his parents and none of their deficiencies (Pomeroy 169). Oxen, for their part, were purported to be easier to train than either horses or mules, and they responded better to commands once broken. In addition the ox’s gear, most often a wooden yoke, was far less expensive than the leather harnesses needed to work a horse or mule. It was also more durable (Matthews 176).

While Hammond considered the horse more intelligent than either the mule or the ox, he didn’t think it “so sure at a dead strain” (37). Furthermore, the horse was more susceptible to disease, and more importantly his ten-year life span was estimated to be about half that of a mule. And unlike oxen, who matured slowly and increased in value with every added pound, a horse, at ten years lost fifty percent of what its value was at six years.

“With us,” Hammond wrote, “he [the horse] is an expensive luxury; alive, consuming our substance, and dead, offering only his hide for saddle skirts or seats, and his carcass—that is of some value—to our manure heaps” (37). Oxen, on the other hand, could be sold for beef, leather, tallow, and various other commodities at the end of its working days. And while alive,

it cost almost nothing to keep. Hammond notes the ox “consumes the offal of the farm—the rotten corn, the wheat straw—fattens on shucks, and turned from his yoke at night to good pasture, he is fresh in the morning and ready again for the day’s work” (37).

Dave Bryant’s experiences as a teamster working oxen as well as horses and mules reinforce many of Hammond’s pro-ox sentiments. Bryant prefers the ox over the horse for small-scale farming—“peanut” farming he calls it—because it’s cheaper to keep. A horse has to be fed well to work regularly while an ox will do fine on night pasture.

You can do your work, just a peanut farmer like me, I’d say, you can do your work and not feed him a bite and turn him into pasture. And he’ll eat from sundown till 10 o’clock and lie down and chew his cud and rest a while. And he’s ready to go again. And the horse you got to feed him. He’ll make you poor. Worse than that he won’t eat enough. You work him pretty hot, and he’ll go and switch and fight the flies and stand there. And he won’t eat enough to keep him a-going like that.

At the end of the season, the steer would be fat, “ready for the beef and I’d sell him on the market” (18 Oct. 1987). Dave would then buy another one around Christmas and have it broke in time for spring plowing, repeating the process year after year.

Oxen had the reputation for being slow, especially in the plow. Yet some farmers maintained that an ox gained at each turn of the row what it may have lost on the stretch (Hammond 37). Others argued that if oxen were slow it was due to the yoke which “worries them, as careless and ignorant persons often put the load too much on their necks, or else not enough; and even when that is rightly adjusted, they often pull against each other.” When used in a collar, attested J. J. McDaniel, “they would [plow] about as much as a slow mule” (564).

The ox’s main weakness was an impatience with hot weather, but “it is easy to humor him in this. Work him from day dawn to eleven o’clock—rest four hours or more and resume the task. He will thus make about as many hours per day as the mule or horse” (Hammond 37). And when new lands needed to be brought under cultivation, Hammond thought that the ox had no rival: “He has torn up the prairie turf to a thoroughness that mules or horses could not approach” (37).

Oxen, unlike the equines, have cloven hooves which allow them to work in muddy fields without getting stuck. In the Tidewater areas of southeastern North Carolina many farmers seem to have preferred oxen over mules for exactly this reason. Beaufort, Columbus, and New Hanover counties, for instance, all had substantially more oxen than mules in 1850 according to Census records. And in Brunswick County oxen outnumbered horses and mules 785 to 653 (501 horses, 152 mules). That year, Henry Howard, a prosperous plantation owner from Brunswick County, used eighteen oxen, two horses, and four mules to bring in 132,500 pounds of rice. His preference for oxen echoed those of another rice planter, Thomas Spalding of Sapelo

Island, Georgia, who, twenty-two years earlier, kept over forty working yokes on his plantation and not a single mule (Coulter 108).

Two decades later oxen had become the dominant draft animal in much of southeastern North Carolina, a position they retained at least as late as 1890. Beaufort, Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, and New Hanover counties produced much of the state's rice crop and were among the leaders in forest revenues. Robeson, Sampson, and Onslow counties with similar agricultural production, also had a high percentage of oxen. The 1870 Census counted 10,101 draft animals in this area, 44 per cent of which were oxen, 19 per cent mules, and 37 per cent horses. Farmers in Brunswick and Columbus counties particularly seemed to hold oxen in high esteem. There oxen had close to a two-to-one edge over horses and mules. While the ox's ability to work in the mud was undoubtedly a factor in its unusual popularity in this area, its importance in lumbering probably played an equal part in elevating the ox to such a lofty position.

Two other counties, Warren and Halifax in the northeast "fall-line" area of the state, had higher than average percentages of oxen throughout the 1850-90 period. A 1950 photo in the 2 June *Durham Morning Herald* shows Burgess Christmas with his ox. The accompanying article suggests that oxen were important in the area until the 1940s and that as late as 1950 there were still numerous ox-teams in use throughout the county. Crockett suggests that the high number of oxen can be attributed to the large number of Black farmers in the county.

The low-lying counties, however, were not the only area to witness a substantial increase in the number of oxen working on its farms. The twenty-four mountain counties saw a dramatic 20 per cent increase in the number of oxen in the forty years between 1850 and 1890. The biggest surge occurred in the ten-year period from 1880 to 1890 when the area's percentage of oxen as draft animals grew by nearly fifteen percentage points from 18 per cent to 32 per cent because, no doubt, of a growing lumber industry. Wilkes and Watauga counties had two- and three-fold increases in their ox populations, while Graham and Swain counties' oxen comprised 59 per cent and 55 per cent of their draft animals.

Getting cut logs out of the woods in the mountains can sometimes prove difficult due to the terrain. Although horses and mules were undoubtedly used to snake logs out of the woods, many farmers apparently preferred oxen for the task. Dave Bryant described how some of the larger operators often used all three animals at a site:

Some of them bigger fellows had horses to pull off of the mountains where the logs wouldn't run or cripple the horses. They'd tell that driver that "you get that driving up here and that, that's rough hauling and I'm going to put that yoke of steers up in there and let so-and-so bring them out." And mules, they had to get off around there; they couldn't get in the swamp. (18 Oct. 1987)

From his own experience Dave thinks that oxen were the best of the three in the woods especially if there were rocks in and along the logging trail:

A horse'll get killed up there. Ol' ox he'll be easing around, tipping about, tipping off of there and putting them dull logs in there to hold them back and he can make it off of there alright. But you take a horse, why he'll get killed for sure. The land back there ... wouldn't be too steep for a horse if there wasn't no rock in the earth, but them rocks would get him killed. (18 Oct. 1987)

And if it was wet, it was best not to use mules. "A mule don't like a mud hole," he says, "he's got to go up and stop and take a look at a mud hole and if the log happened to be a-running, he'd hurt the mule, you know" (18 Oct. 1987). And once in the swamp, a mule was liable to get stuck. Then one of the horses or the oxen would have to help get it out.

Despite a lack of statistical evidence, it seems safe to say that oxen were still very much a part of mountain agriculture well into this century. John Parris's recounts that oxen outnumbered horses in the hills at the turn of the century (1). He may overstate the case, but his estimate does show that seeing a team of oxen was by no means an out of the ordinary occurrence. In fact, sources from oral history confirm that oxen were still being commonly worked up until World War II.

Dave Bryant was born in August 1915 in Caldwell County and remembers seeing oxen coming off the mountain hauling lumber when he was a boy.

You might meet a man, a lumberman—he'd have a big pair of mules, a big load of lumber. You might make a curve or two, and there come a man with a yoke of little oxen and he'd have a load of lumber. [Those oxen would be] a-stepping and they'd be a-bumping the back end of that wagon [all the way] to town on a pair of good stepping mules. (18 Oct. 1987)

He also recalls that he was plowing with one in 1940.

Dave quit "fooling" with steers shortly thereafter and didn't think much about using them for another thirty years. He gave up on the idea of farming some of his father's land because by his own admission, he wasn't "big enough." The opportunity came at a bad time—"I was a-making \$10 a week and a family to keep up and little doctor bills for the children and so on and maybe a couple of them in school. And I just wasn't big enough to do nothing ..." (8 Nov. 1987).

Then one Sunday morning in 1968, some neighborhood boys started asking him questions about driving steers. That conversation got him started: "I got sort of interested and before they left I said I'll get one—I'll grow me one" (8 Nov. 1987). He bought a Hereford calf in the winter of 1969, broke it to the yoke, and called it "Ike." It was word of Ike that brought "Bud" Kistler to meet Dave in 1975.

J. R. "Bud" Kistler grew up on a farm in Lincoln County where he'd used horses and mules. He too remembers seeing oxen at work when he was a boy:

I seen a man over at home when I was a boy working a cotton gin. He'd drive a horse and a Jersey bull to the wagon. Bull on one side, the horse on the other. He had a collar on them and worked them side by side.... He turned the collar upside down and put the hames, traces, at the top of his neck. And the horse pulls from the lower part of his neck, and the bull from the top part of his neck. Just turn the harness hames up and the collar all upside down, and you can just cadillac around with a harness. Same as a yoke. (8 Nov. 1987).

Bud was favorably impressed with the way "Ike" worked and thought that he too would like to have an ox. He also says that he thought plowing with oxen was something worth doing as it wasn't common to see oxen anymore. He was afraid the "seed" would be lost: "People was losing the art of driving oxen and keeping oxen [so] I thought well, somebody's got to take it up or it's going to be gone directly" (8 Nov. 1987). He bought a Holstein steer and asked Dave to break it for him. Although Bud credits Dave with teaching him and Bud (the name they gave the steer) at the same time, he says that it was Ike that really taught him how to drive an ox:

Ike, he was already broke. He taught me, really! 'Course he was so easy. He drove so well. He acted like a person. I mean he acted like you could just talk to him and he'd understand it. (8 Nov. 1987)

That was twelve years ago. Ike and Bud have since met their maker, and Bud and Dave have started a new team, a pair of six-month-old Jersey bull-calves that they've named Ike and Mike.

Training methods vary from teamster to teamster; each has his own preferences about when to start the process, how quickly to proceed, and, in the end, what to expect from his animal. Despite the individual variations, the methodology of breaking steers remains basically unchanged.

In 1870 B.W. Jones of Surry, Virginia, sent this piece of "practical information" to the editor of *The Rural Carolinian* in response to a query about the best way to break oxen for farm labor.

The animals should be castrated while young, say six or nine months old, and should be petted and treated with great kindness from the first, in order to make them gentle. Begin to break them to the use of harness while still young. First begin by putting a line upon them, and lead them about. Then yoke with a very light yoke, not for labor, but to familiarize them to its use. (430-31)

More or less, that is what Bud and Dave had planned for Ike and Mike in fall 1987. The animals had already been frequently and extensively handled; the day to put them in the yoke for the first time had arrived.

After luring them into an enclosed pen with a little bit of grain, Bud haltered them and let them eat a bit. "Get used to it and you'll live a long time," he said as he leaned over to lift one's head up into the yoke. While they finished eating, Bud began tying a piece of baling twine into one calf's tail. Dave said that's not how he'd do it so Bud asked him to take over and handed him the string. After braiding it into both the calves' tails and knotting it, he wrapped black electric tape around the tied ends about an inch up each tail. This would prevent the calves from turning in the yoke. Tails

tied, Dave cut a little switch off a tree and goaded them on from behind.

Ike, the smaller and darker of the two, kept putting his head down and stopping. To get him going again, Dave or Bud—they took turns driving them around the pasture—would twist his tail and urge him along with a tap of the switch under the chin and a “C’mon, get that head up.” Occasionally this procedure had to be repeated a few times, but they managed to keep the calves moving for most of the next hour.

Bud said he was going to leave them in the yoke until sunset. He didn’t think they’d get caught up on anything, and it would help get them used to it. “I’d leave them in that yoke for a week,” Dave suggested as we left the field, “there ain’t nothing they can get hung up on.” Earlier Dave had told me how one man he knew had broken his team just that way. After picking out a pair of four-year-olds out of the herd and deciding on a price, the story went, the man went back to his car and took out a yoke. They ran the two oxen into the barn, yoked them up, and turned them back out into the pasture. The man said that he wanted to leave them out there for a week. Dave Bryant tells what then happened:

And you know he came back in a week and got them steers, and he opened the gate and hit the road not a line on them or nothing. And he had a little whip and drove them with a whip. And he drove home that night, drove them to the sawmill. And they was on sap poplar, oh just small logs, you know ... And a month’s time them little things are out there doing it just as pretty as you ever saw. (18 Oct. 1987)

“Once they get tired of fighting it,” Bud explained, “they’ll get used to the yoke. And it’s easy then.” We watched the calves for a while and talked. The calves kept their heads down and didn’t move a step. “Maybe they think that if they keep their heads down long enough the yoke will fall off,” Bud added, laughing.

Bud intended to ring Ike and Mike through the nose later that winter. This facilitates working them from behind as lines, or traces, can be run through these rings and back to the teamster, who can direct the team to the right or left with just a slight tug on the corresponding line. He can also manage an unrung team by wrapping a rope or chains around their horns and back to the driver. Since Bud and Dave plan on using Ike and Mike in much the same way that they used their last team—for some farm work and a lot of parading—driving them from behind will prove invaluable.

Neither Bud nor Dave needs his ox for draft-power, animal or otherwise. Bud owns several horses, including a Belgian, that could provide him with any animal power he might want; he also has a tractor and access to all sorts of heavy equipment from his contracting business. Dave owns a horse, two jennets, and a mule (he has also recently purchased a billy goat that he’s trained to pull a cart) so he too would appear to have all the animal power he needs. Why, then, do they choose to keep them?

Viewed in the context of their deep interest in the history of the region, Bud's and Dave's enthusiasm for oxen is part of a much larger picture. Both men, especially Bud, often talk about the past, not only in terms of when they were growing up but also of the "old" days. "Ain't too many people got the patience to work oxen anymore," Bud is fond of saying, "they all want something faster and bigger. They're all in too big a hurry." Working around his animals Bud seems much more relaxed than otherwise.

Bud's hobby is restoring old wagons, sleighs, and carts. Among the many vehicles he has revitalized is a Conestoga-type covered wagon originally built by the Neese Wagon Company of Winston-Salem. He remade the wheels (all but the hubs) and rebuilt and painted the body and tongue. "That wagon's a piece of history," he says proudly. The oxen will allow him to pull it and show it at parades, just as he and Dave did with Ike and Ol' Bud in 1976, driving them through downtown Charlotte in the Bicentennial parade. He also had a postcard made of Ike and Ol' Bud pulling the wagon while Dave stood beside it, rifle in hand.

Bud says he'd like to see three teams worked together in tandem, each pulling a wagon or cart. While that would be an impressive sight for twentieth-century eyes to behold, it would surely not be the first time a train of oxen made its way through the rolling hills of Caldwell County. Two hundred fifty years ago countless teams of oxen must have passed not too far east of here carrying the material possessions of the people who settled this area down the Valley of Virginia. And later, as the western Piedmont grew in population, they played an important role in the developing economy, carrying both manufactured and agricultural production to market. Although the overall importance of oxen declined in the following 200 years, they never completely disappeared.

There are not very many working oxen left in North Carolina; Bud and Dave know of only one other man in Lenoir who keeps a few. There may well be more. So while the number of oxen would indicate a dying tradition, Bud and Dave's enthusiasm for these animals is very much alive. They, like many nineteenth-century farmers before them, appreciate the ox for what it is: economical, useful, and worth keeping. "If I could get me a pair of Devons," Dave said excitedly at the end of the day, "I'd sell everything: my horse, my jennets, my mule." Until then, he'll settle for Ike and Mike.

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1988 Student Contest Honorable Mention

**Medieval vs. Modern:
Anecdotes from the Society for Creative
Anachronisms**

by Christopher J. Lucht

As the sun slowly set, Sir Greenwich fastened his flowing cloak over his sweat-covered tunic and began his long walk home, weary but invigorated from the day's long battle. He could have taken the city bus, but he thought a brisk walk in the cool night air would be good for him after the day's toils. Suddenly a wild-eyed youth sprang from a dimly lit alley and brandished a sinister looking switchblade. "Give me your money or I'll cut you," said the mugger with his blade poised for the strike. After a little consideration, Sir Greenwich raised his arms and said, "Go ahead, stab me!" The mugger looked rather confused for a second, but then decided to teach this quack a lesson and took a quick stab at him. Because this knight happened to still have his chainmail shirt on underneath his tunic, the mugger's blade made a nice snapping sound and broke into two pieces. Not wishing to be impolite, Sir Greenwich drew his "blade," a twenty-six inch steel sword, and said, "Is it my turn now?" The mugger quickly decided that it was not and fled.

For the members of the Society for Creative Anachronisms, this is a common tale often heard at their gatherings, one generally referred to as "The Mugger vs. The Chainmail Shirt." The version told above is one I heard several years ago when I first encountered the group at one of their public demonstrations. This group, which tries to recreate various aspects of medieval life in modern times, has developed an interesting and revealing

repertoire of stories about what happens when their medieval world comes head to head with the “real” modern world. An examination of these tales reveals not only how others “see” the group, but more importantly, how they “see” themselves.

The Society for Creative Anachronisms—the Society or SCA for short—was founded in 1966 in Berkeley, California. According to SCA member Ian Sinclair, the Society was formed as a protest against the twentieth century. It began simply as a one-day event: a medieval tournament where people paraded down the streets of Berkeley protesting the “mundaneness” of the current century. The instigators of this protest, Marian Zimmer Bradley, Diana Paxon, and others, many of whom are now prominent science fiction writers, liked the event so much that they had another a few months later. And they liked that event so much, they had another and another, with things snowballing from there. Approximately two years after that first event, some of the leaders in the group set down in writing the specific premises of the group and got the SCA nationally recognized as a non-profit educational society about the Middle Ages. Because a large part of the SCA is connected with actual combat, although with padded weapons, many rules had to be devised to keep the group from being liable for any accidental injuries. These rules also make it relatively safe to fight. With strict requirements on the different padded weapons and armor, combat injuries more serious than an array of bruises become rare.

Although SCA chapters (or provinces) exist all over the United States, the SCA is still an enigma to the majority of onlookers who come to their public demonstrations and tournaments. Because of the strange costumes SCA members wear, costumes generally referred to as “garb,” they get varied reactions from the general public. Stories of unusual encounters between SCA people and the “mundanes” constitute a major part if not the majority of the folklore of the Society. Close examination of these tales reveals not only how the SCA wants itself to be seen, but also what members value as its ideals.

Two SCA members from Durham, N.C., Sara Jane Raines and Ian Sinclair, described most mundane encounter stories as falling into two categories: “fight” and “flight” stories. Stories in the first category revolve around people who see the SCA as a bunch of “weirdos” or “wimps” and decide to confront them, often physically provoking a fight. The “flight” stories are usually less action-oriented in that people again perceive the group’s members as very strange, but decide to avoid these people with all due haste. According to Ian, provocative outsiders in the first category, the “fight” stories, are in more danger than they think because these “guys in dresses” are usually excellent fighters.

In other variants of “The Mugger vs. The Chainmail Shirt” story, the attacker usually gets battered to a pulp by a wooden sword, broom handle, or anything resembling a medieval weapon. Sara Jane Raines heard a variation on this theme:

The version I've heard most often is ... told as a lord and a lady are walking either to the liquor store or someplace else away from an event. And while they are walking along on the street, some mugger comes out and says, "Give me your money or I'll give you six inches of steel." And the lord usually draws his sword and says, "I'll take your six and raise you twenty!" And the mugger usually runs away.

In addition to having the various ironies or turns of phrase that make any story interesting and entertaining to hear, the "mugger" stories extol many important ideals of the SCA. The most significant is the promotion of chivalry, not just among themselves, but in the mundane world as well. These stories exhibit many traits of this chivalric ideal, most importantly the defense of the weak and helpless. By being seen as a helpless person in these mugger stories, the SCA member takes on the role of the victim or defender of women. He then rights the situation by turning the tables on the attacker, thus championing the weak victims of muggers everywhere. In almost all cases a knight will even treat this dastardly foe with generosity or at least honor. This kind treatment of one's enemy is shown most often when the knight lets the mugger run away or gives him sufficient opportunity to change his current course of action. In the story of "The Robber vs. The SCA Convenience Store Attendant," as told by Sara, these qualities are further expressed:

... this story goes that there is a knight whose mundane job is working in a convenience store and you know convenience stores often get robbed. So he's working the graveyard shift and this robber comes in with a gun, and he says, "Give me your money." And the knight says, "You don't want to do that because I've got this broom handle here." And the guy [the robber] says, "Come on, just give me your money." And [the knight] he says, "Really, really, I've got this broom handle—you don't want to do this." And the robber says, "Give me your money or I'm gonna shoot you!" And the guy [the knight] says, "Okay, I warned you!" and beats the shit out of the guy, because he uses it like a great sword and goes Whap! Whap! Whap! and the mugger is so shocked that he can't do anything, and the knight calls the police and the robber gets arrested.

Another story in this category involves a close friend of local member Ian Sinclair, a Viking character named Sir Olaf. Although Sir Olaf is an excellent fighter, he often wears "tights" as part of his costume, something that usually provokes a reaction from many "locals." Ian tells the story:

... One time in South Carolina, he [Sir Olaf] and a couple of his friends went to a bar, and this bar was not in the best part of town ... basically a bunch of drunken rednecks hanging out at this bar, but Olaf and a couple of his squires went in to get a beer. While they're doing this, a guy who had too much to drink started making jokes about the fact that Olaf was wearing tights. So this guy starts making fun of Olaf and starts calling him a faggot, and Olaf just sort of ignores it for a while until the guy gets right up in his face and says, "Did ya hear me? I called you a faggot!" And Olaf just sort of looked at him and says, "I'm probably the only faggot wearing tights in this bar who can beat the living shit out of you so you had better go away." [Realizing he probably could,] the guy just sort of crawled away.

This story illustrates how the Society stresses the merit of individual conduct above all else. As Ian explains, “the SCA is one of the few places where a man can wear tights and still be considered very masculine” because a man can always prove himself on the battlefield. A person is also judged by how well he behaves, not by what he looks like or wears. Honor is something carried on the inside, not worn on the outside.

The “flight” category of SCA stories is intrinsically less volatile and consequently reveals more subtle attitudes about the Society. These stories illustrate both the benefits and the hazards of looking and acting different from the surrounding community. Most “beneficial” stories involve situations similar to the one in “The Knight in the 7-11,” as Ian tells it:

Lots of times when you’re in the Society and you have to run out to ... 7-11 to get beer or something for the feast— you just walk in in your garb and forget about it. At some events I’ve seen people accidentally walk in with swords and axes on their belts ... I’m talking Viking broadswords four inches across, nasty looking weapons.... Knives freak people out. Swords look like props, but knives look serious, especially the knives the people in the Society carry. And you get the strangest looks when you walk in ... to get your beer or whatever, and you notice that everyone is getting out of your way—people are clearing the aisles for you, and staring at you simply because you’ve forgotten to take your weapons off in your car. And I know people who will do this on purpose to get better service ... because people will get out of their way [and] they’ll get faster service.

In related anecdotes, Ian describes certain acquaintances of his who often wear a few extra daggers when going to a place like McDonald’s just to get better service. There are more subtle reasons for going into the public eye wearing strange attire; getting respect, having control, or simply attracting attention are all seen as benefits of the SCA, ones illustrated by these stories.

There are, however, just as many stories about how “mundane” false perceptions have almost caused major disasters. One story vividly remembered by Sara Raines concerns one of her close friends who ended up having no “control” in a situation. The following story is titled “Eldred and the Catapult”:

Eldred is one of our more prominent barony members—he is probably going to be baron real soon. Well, one day Eldred was going to an event and he was all dressed up in garb. And he and this other guy had built a catapult and he was pulling it behind his truck, it was set on a trailer, and he was taking it to an event. He was entering it as a period construction of siege engines [in the Arts and Sciences Competition]. So he was going to this event which was in the southern part of South Carolina [when] this sheriff pulled him over. The sheriff gets out and looks at the catapult from all sides and looks at the missiles they were using—big foam rubber blocks. He went up to the front and before Eldred could say a word, the sheriff said, “I don’t care what it is, I don’t care what you’re going to use it for, just get it the hell out of my county!” He then sent them [quickly] on their way and made Eldred paranoid ever since. He doesn’t carry catapults around anymore.

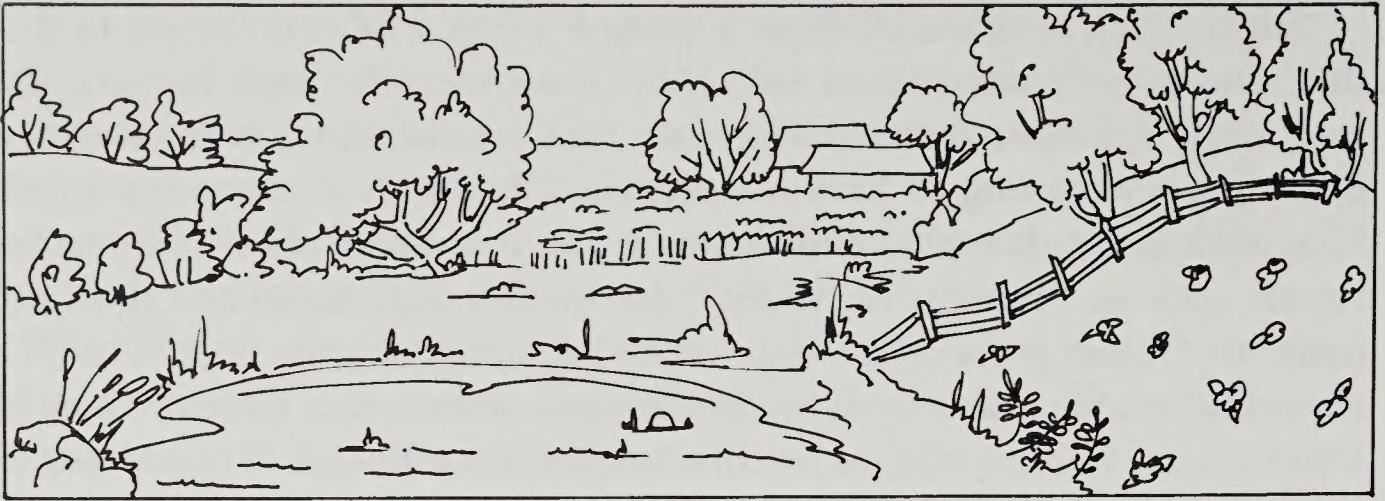
Stories such as this are told as a caution to other SCA members to show that ignorance in others does not always leave room for explanations. One such story is about a Shire in Tennessee that got disbanded because of such ignorance. According to Sara Raines, the Christians in that area got the idea in their heads that the SCA was a cult movement and held demonic rituals such as “human sacrifices.” At the time this happened the whole issue of “missing children” was receiving national attention. The SCA naturally became a scapegoat because it was unknown and therefore possibly a cult group. Public pressure became so great that the sheriff disbanded the shire and eliminated all SCA functions in the local area.

Sara Raines related a similar story in which a simple misunderstanding coupled with the best of intentions almost led to some serious legal problems for herself and especially her husband:

I used to work in the 9th Street Bakery during the summer. There, it gets really hot in there so I wear shorts to work. Since I worked in the back, we didn’t have a dress code or anything. And when I would come to work Monday morning, I would have bruises all over my thighs and my arms from fighting, because the armor I was wearing back then was kinda thin. And my supervisor said, “Sara, where did you get all those bruises from?” And I said, “Oh, Kevin (my husband) did ’em, he just beat the crap out of me this weekend.” And I said it kinda flippantly, because it’s a running joke in the society that “fighter practice” is the only place you can really take out your aggression on your husband, wife, girlfriend, etc. So my supervisor called the social services people because she thought my husband was really beating me. And I had to explain to her about a week and a half later that, no, this was a sport and that I gave him bruises too. That’s the closest I know of anyone getting arrested [in the SCA].

Stories such as these reinforce the fact that the Society does not live in a vacuum. “Mundane” people need to know what the SCA is all about or else ignorance will cause unnecessary friction between the two different worlds. There are even some beneficial aspects to bridging the gap between the two worlds. One reason people join the SCA and enjoy being in it is that in some senses an SCA member has “one up” on mundane people. Previous examples, such as the mugger stories, show how skills or talents acquired in the SCA turn out to be useful also in the “real” world.

All these various stories of encounters between the medieval world of the SCA and the “real” or mundane world stem from the simple fact that members look different. They wear funny-looking clothes and do seemingly strange things. Because of this behavior, they are often ridiculed but seldom taken advantage of. These stories are told to reinforce the ideals that make the Society what it is, give caution to others who would break these ideals, and remind its own members that a larger world outside the fantasy does exist.



1988 Student Contest Essay

Corn Shucking: A Way to Work and Play

By Christopher S. Stepp

The settlements were few and far between in the southern foothills area of the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina. There, in the early part of this century, life was hard, and the people were poor. The rural, backwoods environment was characterized by small communities of people who lived within a four-to-five-mile radius. Outside the settlement, there were little more than mountains and wilderness that had to be overcome to reach the nearest town. Furthermore, a trip to town was an all-day adventure. Roads were few, and those that existed were rough and primitive. Machinery, money, and a labor force were no exception to the rule of scarcity. In order to cope with hard times, the people helped each other. One way in which they helped each other was the annual event called corn shucking.

November was the time for corn shucking. Neighbors met to pick the year's crop and pile it high on the ground. The final stage in the process of harvesting was shucking and storing the corn for the winter ahead. This was a festive time of year, for events like corn shuckings brought people together. They combined the work of shucking corn with a social gathering. Neighbors from all around came to the shucking, enjoyed good food, a story or two, a drink or two of whiskey and, in the process, helped the host complete an otherwise burdensome task.

I learned of the corn shucking by talking with my grandparents, Clarence and Elsie Shipman, who are natives of the western North Carolina foothills. They were born and raised in the lower part of Henderson County, North Carolina, near the border of South Carolina. As they talked of corn shuckings and the good ol' days, their eyes lit with happiness, and their voices

filled with a strength I had not heard for many years. As I watched their joy at reminiscing, I was quickly convinced that the corn shucking was an event anticipated by all who participated.

Grandfather can remember attending a corn shucking when he was about five years old, which would have been around 1902. He says the frequency of corn shuckings increased as families grew larger and more numerous. Therefore, we can infer that the size of the crop had a lot to do with whether or not a family would hold a corn shucking. The larger families needed more corn, grew more corn, and had enough children to help work the crop. Smaller families grew less corn and did not need the neighbors' help to shuck it for winter storage. Because my grandfather's family had eleven children, two parents, and a grandmother, they needed a great deal of corn and always had a corn shucking. In an average year, his family produced approximately three hundred bushels of corn for storage, so it is easy to understand why help was needed.

The principal reason for shucking the corn was to ensure that it not only provided for the livestock's winter feed, but also for the production of meal that helped to feed the family. Corn, ground into meal, was a basic and vital staple for the mountain people's diet. My grandfather said that his family often ate cornbread for breakfast, corn fritters for lunch, and cornbread again at supper. Considering the fact that store-bought flour was a nonentity, it is easy to understand the importance of the role that corn played in the lives of these people. Furthermore, there was no baled hay or bagged feed for the cattle, pigs, oxen, horses, and chickens that had to be fed throughout the long winter, so the corn crop also served this purpose. Had commodities been available, there was no money, and no means of making money with which to buy goods, so the necessities of survival had to be produced from the land on which they lived. After they shucked the corn, they stored it in the corn crib, which was a type of enclosed building, and then they stored the shucks in a separate building. The best ears of corn they ground into meal, and the remainder along with the shucks, they fed to the animals. They also used shucks for making mops. My grandparents say that the shucks made good mops, since there was no such thing as buying a mop.

The corn shuckings took place near the end of the week, on a Thursday or Friday, usually, but never on Saturday, when people made their all-day trip to town. During the corn harvest season, two or three households would host a corn shucking in one week. Grandmother said that at times, if the people had their corn piled high and ready, they would shuck two or three people's corn in one day. However, the common practice was to arrive early in the morning at the host's farm and shuck until the job was finished, which meant that sometimes they had to shuck into the night by lantern light.

Shucking used a special tool. It was a locust stick, about five inches long, sharpened on one end. When strapped to the index finger with a soft piece

of leather, a locust stick broke the shuck away from an ear of corn. By piercing the shuck and pushing the locust stick through the shuck, the people did a quicker job and protected their fingers from becoming sore or blistered. It was the responsibility of each individual to provide his own corn shucking tool. In the weeks prior to shucking season, the people would make themselves two or three "shuckers." These seem to be rather ingenious tools that also signify the importance of the corn shucking to the people of that time. Certainly, the act of shucking large amounts of corn was quite a task and because of its great importance, the people felt the need to devote the considerable time required in inventing and producing a special purpose tool.

With the corn shucking's being a festive sort of event, it was necessary that a fine meal be served. The people killed a cow and served part of it at the shucking. They stewed the meat in a large, black iron pot, heated by a wood cook stove or an open fire. Chicken and dumplings were also a main dish, along with plenty of cabbage, turnips, potatoes and other vegetables. To sweeten the meal, an assortment of pies were made. My grandmother describes the pumpkin, apple, and sweet potato pies as being delicious. She says the wife would be baking all week in preparation and that the pies would be stacked, one on top of the other, as high as three feet. The amount of food preparation alone is enough to suggest the importance of the corn shucking. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that during that time, when there was no electricity, no meat freezers, and limited beef and pork, the corn shucking must have been of great importance because those that hosted it carried the full burden of providing the obligatory meal.

At my grandfather's family's corn shucking, approximately thirty to forty people attended. He describes these events in an interesting way by saying that they could seat twelve people at his family table and that at a corn shucking, they always fed at least three tables of people. There was no apparent ordering about who would eat first or when the meal was to be served. The tacit assumption, however, was that the older people would eat first. There was also no separation of the sexes. The men and women ate together and sat together, just as they had worked together. When the food was ready to eat, a group would be called for serving while the others remained working. At corn shuckings where there was not a large table, people would sit wherever they could find a seat, indoors or outdoors. It seems obvious that the guidelines for social behavior were few and that the ones which existed were tacitly understood and for the most part followed.

A primary part of the social activity was the consuming of homemade alcohol—another use of corn. My grandparents say that the best whiskey is that made from corn. Although "bootlegging" and "moonshining" were not a large part of their people's lives, my grandparents speak of homemade liquor as being a definite part of social life. At the corn shuckings, the jug of liquor was apparently easily found and plentiful. There seemed to be few

restrictions placed on the consumption of liquor, for the young and old, male and female, all partook in the pleasures and pains that alcohol provides. For the most part, however, it was the older men who drank. If the women drank, and few of them did, they would do it in private and almost never at a corn shucking. Yet, there was occasionally some lady who did not obey the norm and would "tip and jug" with the boys and men. Even though she did this act, there was apparently no sanction for the action, other than the respect that she might lose from the other men and women for her actions.

The only song that my grandparents can recall being associated with the corn shucking was the one-line tune, "Hang John Brown on a sour apple tree." This was shouted out, rather than being sung or chanted. The meaning of the words is revealing: "John Brown" represents the jug corn whiskey and is hung "in the sour apple tree" so that it can be easily reached. The sour apple was used to represent the chaser, and in some cases, my grandmother says, the apple was actually used to chase the sting of the whiskey. The song's statement exemplifies the frequent and free use of the corn liquor. The element of alcohol at the corn shucking event tells us of the attitude and the social acceptance of alcohol at that time. Later, when prohibition was enacted, the pendulum swung to the conservative side. It is interesting to compare the attitude then with the attitude of today. The abuse of alcohol at the events then does not seem to have been a problem. It could usually be predicted who would drink too much, and thus, it was not too much of a problem to handle drunks because they were known drunks and people were accustomed to them. When I asked my grandparents what type of action was taken towards those who drank too much, my grandmother replied with a chuckle that they would pile the drunks "out in the bushes until they got ready to go."

Sometime around 1935, the corn shucking became a thing of history. The availability of machines seems to have been one reason for its demise. The tractor and the automobile enabled people to work the mountain land better, grow a cash crop, and transport it to the market. Therefore, they kept fewer animals and grew less corn. The families also became dispersed and less unified. Jobs were available and cities were developing, so the children would often leave the homeplace in pursuit of their own lives rather than stay and work their family's land. The once strong element of human cooperation also seemed to fade and with it went the traditional practice of shucking the neighbor's corn. People became more independent and relied less upon each other. Thus, it appears that the corn shucking disappeared as the social cooperation of the rural backwoods broke down.

WORK CITED

Information in this paper comes from an interview with Clarence and Elsie Shipman, recorded in Hendersonville, North Carolina, on April 2, 1987. The recording of the interview is deposited in the Southern Folklore Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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